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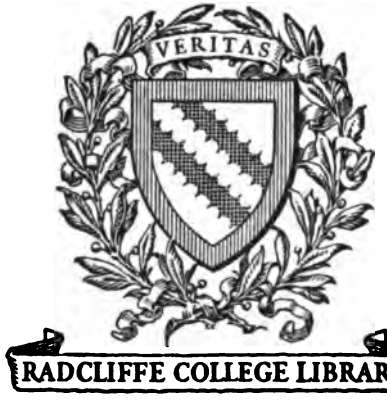

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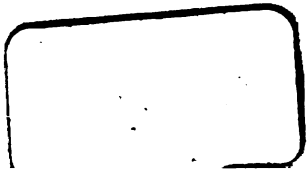

WOMAN THROUGH THE AGES

CHARLOTTE BRONTË

FROM A DRAWING IN CHALKS BY GEORGE RICHMOND, R.A., IN 1850

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

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WOMAN
THROUGH THE AGES

BY

EMIL REICH

IN TWO VOLUMES

WITH THIRTY-SIX ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME II

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WOMAN
THROUGH THE AGES

ENGLISH WOMEN OF THE TUDOR PERIOD

THE part played by certain of the Tudor Queens of England is so prominent that no notice of that period can be complete which does not touch upon the life and thought of these leaders of their sex. It is not, however, intended to cumber this work with historical details of common knowledge, except so far as they tend to elucidate the characteristics of the women of the age collectively, or to delineate the character of any typical individual.

The history of the Tudor period is the history of the Reformation, and the Reformation brought about a startling change in the general condition of the civilized world. The Cape of Good Hope was successfully doubled by Portuguese sailors; Cabot was navigating his way through the icebergs of Labrador; Columbus, by his discovery of the New World, enlarged men's notions of their surroundings, and widened the field of their speculations. After the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, the Greek scholars who fled to Italy "opened anew the science and literature of the older world at the very hour

when the intellectual energy of the Middle Ages had sunk into exhaustion."[1]

This *New Learning* was *the* influence on the spirit of the age, and fashioned the lives of the women and men of the period. The English people seized with eagerness the knowledge that was thus brought almost to their doors. The Queens of England, setting a fashion in learning and culture which was keenly imitated by the ladies of their Courts, became proficient in Latin and Greek, and to judge from the letters that have come down to us, some of them certainly could not be surpassed in the art of composition.

The outcome of the *New Learning* was a desire to encourage simplicity of worship. Colet, one of the pioneers of the New Creed—if so it can be called—based his faith simply "on the vivid realization of the person of Christ." He was followed with whole-hearted devotion by Erasmus. To this band More soon joined himself, giving his country *Utopia*, a work in which he pictured a land of ideals and of perfect happiness. The author of *Utopia*, or "Nowhere," based his religion "on nature and reason. It held that God's design was the happiness of man . . . religion found its centre rather in the *family* than in the congregation . . . In 'Nowhere' it was lawful to every man to be of what religion he would."[2]

This, then, was the seed sown by the New Learning. The masterful spirit of Henry VIII caused a rupture with the Church of Rome, and when that Church would not countenance his divorce from Katharine of Aragon, his passion for Anne Boleyn widened the breach. His reign was disfigured by the

[1] Green, J. R., *History of the English People*, p. 304.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 319.

martyrdoms of the Countess of Salisbury and of Anne Askew. Tracing the growth of the seed through the rule of the Tudor monarchs, we find the horrors of Queen Mary perpetrated in a fanatical endeavour to restore England to the power of Rome. And Elizabeth, the last ruler of the period, was compelled, not so much by her own inclinations as by circumstances and the designs of her enemies, to advocate Protestantism.

During the course of this regeneration, however, England was in a state of turmoil, and by the beginning of Elizabeth's reign "all reserve, all decorum had gone out from the life of the people. They observed no fast day, neither did they enjoy any holiday as of old . . . murder, rapine, and every form of lawless violence were practised with comparative immunity"; and it was as common for men of the class of Wild Darrell "to debauch their neighbours' wives as for two yeomen to draw on each other at a county fair."[1] It was difficult enough for men to safeguard their lives and interest, and therefore it is not surprising to find the women of the age subjected to hardships, and in many cases to the extremes of suffering. The beautiful Isabella Markham, the wife of Sir John Harington, was dismissed from attendance on Elizabeth when princess for the crime of refusing to attend Mass, and was lodged in the Tower. The aged Lady Poulet, suspected of recusancy in Elizabeth's reign, was obliged to suffer the indignity of being personally examined by the sheriff of the county. Even the position of Katharine Parr did not exempt her from the general tyranny. Her devotion to the Protestant religion brought her into conflict with Gardiner, who accused her "of encourag-

[1] Hall, Hubert, *Society in the Elizabethan Age*, pp. 104–11.

ing more vehement forms of Protestantism." Happily, the King dismissed the accusation, and she herself was not called upon to suffer for her cause; but her gentle nature revolted against the cruelty inflicted on Anne Askew. This girl, who was a fervent Protestant, escaped one persecution in 1545, thanks to the good nature of Bonner, but in the following year she was attacked by the Gardiner and Wriothesley faction, and asked to state her opinions on the Eucharist. She asserted her innocence in a letter to the King, which was utterly ignored, and she met death in noble silence after a prolonged torture, inflicted to try and extort evidence against Lady Hertford and the Duchess of Suffolk.[1]

But it was not only in matters of religion that persecution was rampant. The "reckless lawlessness" of the times is brought out by the following two cases of gross injustice suffered by mere country girls.[2] In the first case, Richard Cox, Bishop of Ely, impudently impounded the only steer of a poor maid, and he and his household fed on it; the girl, daring to seek redress, was dismissed without a hearing. The second case furnishes the most scandalous instance of lawlessness ever heard of. A farmer's maidservant, in Northamptonshire, was leading a pair of horses with a harrow, and walking in front of them. Her master, who was ploughing in the next field, being dissatisfied with her progress, left his work, stole behind the horses, and suddenly struck them, the result being that they spang forward, knocked down the girl, and drew the harrow over her, killing her. The laziness of the servant was the provocation pleaded, and *the plea held good.* In addition to these greater risks of

[1] Froude, J. A., *History of England* (1867), vol. vi., p. 498 *seq.*
[2] Hall, H., *Society in the Elizabethan Age*, pp. 115–75.

life and freedom, there seems to have been a lesser one, purely social, confined to those women who married clergymen. The parson's marriage vows evidently involved a certain amount of uncertainty, and there was always the possibility of a doubt whether his wife would be held to be joined to him in holy matrimony. William Harrison, whom we have to thank for an interesting account of the country during the period under discussion, himself a clergyman, was determined that *his* wife should run no such risk, for in his will he expressly alludes to her in these words—"whom by the lawes of God I take and repute in all respectes for my true and lawful wife."[1]

In times of peace superstition slumbers, if it does not actually die; but in these stirring times of internal conflicts and foreign complications, it is scarcely matter for surprise that superstition was rife, not only at Court, but in the ranks of the populace. Elizabeth regarded as ominous everything in the nature of a deformity, and was always influenced by outward appearances. Clairvoyants were in great demand, and the Queen herself resorted to Dr. Dee in order that he might fix an auspicious day for her coronation. This quack had been prosecuted for telling her fortune when princess, and for daring to cast the nativity of Queen Mary.[2] In this respect, a curious story is told of an imposition practised on the people of London during the earlier days of the latter's reign. A voice, supernatural it was thought, was heard to issue from an uninhabited house, round which crowds of men and women gathered daily. When the people cheered for Mary, the voice was silent; but when they praised

[1] Withington, L., *Elizabethan England.* Furnivall's *Forewords*, p. xvii.

[2] Tytler, P. F., *England under Edward VI and Mary*, vol. ii., p. 479.

Elizabeth, the voice responded with showers of blessing on the head of the Princess. This "spirit in the wall" was creating a wonderful impression on the minds of the people, and so orders were given that the house should be pulled down, when it was discovered that the angel voice belonged to a very human old woman, who confessed to counterfeiting the supernatural.[1]

The marriage of Elizabeth of York with Henry VII united the rival houses of York and Lancaster. "Good Queen Elizabeth" (not to be confounded with Queen Bess), as her subjects called her, was an elegant woman, of graceful carriage, with delicate features and a beautiful complexion; but more remarkable than her beauty is the calm "serenity of expression" to be seen in her portraits; her resemblance to her mother, the beautiful Elizabeth Woodville, was particularly noticeable in her light golden hair. "Her usual costume was a veil or scarf richly bordered with gems, put on like a hood, hanging down on each side of the face as low as the breast."[2] Her husband delighted in showing his love for her, and held many a fête and tourney in her honour. A quaint story is told in connection with a feast, at which their Majesties were present, "at the Bishop's place of Elie in Holborne. . . . In digging for to lay a new foundation stone in the church of Saint Marie Hill in London, the bodie of Alice Hackneie, which had beene buried in the church the space of 175 yeares, was found whole of skinne, and the joints of her armes pliable."[3]

A short account of the bridal tournament held in honour of the marriage of Katharine of Aragon with

[1] Burnet, G., *Hist. of the Reformation*, vol. i., p. 488.
[2] Strickland, A., *Lives of the Queens of England*, vol. ii., p. 96.
[3] Holinshed, R., *Chronicles*, vol. iii., p. 509.

Henry VIII will serve to give some idea of this popular entertainment of the day. The bride and the royal party travelled in barges to Westminster. The space in front of Westminster Hall was converted into a tilt yard, whilst the common people crowded the stages built round the arena. The Queen, the bride, and their ladies entered on the left side, while the King and his gentlemen entered on the right. It is worthy of note that, though there was familiarity between the sexes in private intercourse, in matters of ceremony they were separate. At the banquet, for instance, after the tourney at Westminster Hall, though the King and Queen occupied seats at the head of the table, the Queen's ladies extended the length of one side of the table, whilst the King's gentlemen occupied the opposite side of the board. To return to the tourney: those who were taking part in the pageant appeared in the lists under fanciful canopies, carried by their retainers. The Earl of Essex "had a mountain of green carried over him as his pavilion; and upon it many trees, rocks, and marvellous beasts . . . The Lord Marquis of Dorset, half-brother to the Queen, had borne over him a rich pavilion of cloth of gold, himself always riding within the same, drest in armour."[1] These may serve as specimens of the show which delighted not only the Court, but hundreds of men and women who jostled each other on the stands round the arena.

Katharine of Aragon began her career as Queen of England under the brightest auspices, with no qualms concerning the lastingness of her husband's love; this is manifest in a letter to her father, which thanks him out of a full heart for her happy marriage —the work of his hands, which she kisses "for so

[1] Strickland, A., *Lives of the Queens of England*, vol. ii., p. 106.

signal a favour."[1] And Henry himself was evidently no less satisfied than his wife with the match, for in a letter, dated July 26th, 1509, he acknowledges the complimentary messages of his father-in-law, and declares that the eminent virtues of the most serene lady, his very-beloved consort, "daily more shine forth, blossom, and increase so much, that if we were still free, her we would yet choose for our wife before all others."[2]

From the outset Katharine identified herself with the interests of her adopted country, giving proof of her tenderness of heart wherever an opportunity occurred. She welcomed to her palace Margaret, widow of James IV, who had fled from her troubles in Scotland. She made every reparation possible to the relatives of Edward Plantagenet, who had been killed by Henry VII so that she herself might marry and live in safety, without fear of a rival to the throne. The Countess of Salisbury, who was afterwards executed, was installed as first lady in her household, and her friendship cultivated. She was conspicuously kind to Reginald Pole, the son of the Countess; and she entrusted her infant Mary to the care of Katharine Pole.

The Queen's happiness, however, was suddenly marred by the return to England of Anne Boleyn, who had been in residence at the French Court. Sir Thomas Boleyn and the heirs of the Butlers had been disputing over the inheritance of the last Earl of Wiltshire, and the Earl of Surrey suggested to the King that a marriage between the two families would be the best way to overcome the difficulty. Henry fell in

[1] Wood, M. A. E., *Letters of Royal . . . Ladies* (1846), vol. i., p. 158.

[2] *Egerton MSS.; Mus. Brit. Bibl. Egerton*, 616; Strickland, A., *Lives of the Queens of England*, vol. ii., p. 124.

with the proposal, and directed Wolsey to bring about such a marriage; consequently, Anne was brought from France for the purpose of marrying Piers the Red, or Sir Piers Butler.[1] Holbein's pencil furnishes sufficient evidence that Anne inherited the good looks of her mother, who was at one time the reigning beauty of the Court. The king fell a victim to the girl's charms, and on the occasion of a masque held at Greenwich, went to the length of having his admiration for her publicly declared by the singing of a sonnet which he had himself composed in her honour[2]—

> The eagle's force subdues each bird that flies:
> What metal can resist the flaming fire?
> Doth not the sun dazzle the clearest eyes,
> And melt the ice and make the frost retire?
> The hardest stones are piercèd through with tools,
> The wisest are with princes made but fools.

Henry's unsuccessful appeals to the Pope for a divorce from Katharine, and the widening of the breach between Rome and England, which had already been caused by his assumption of the title "Supreme Head of the Church of England," are well-known matters of history. Suffice it to say that Katharine was ultimately summoned to appear before the Legatine Court in England. So free of guilt was she that Henry himself, during her absence from Court, extolled her virtues and "commended her in strong terms . . . but as to what was said see it at large in Cavendish"[3]; and so pathetic is the Queen's appeal when she ultimately consented to appear before her judges, that it is worth while taking Grove's

[1] Lingard, J., *History of England*, vol. vi., p. 172.
[2] Harrington, H., *Nugae Antiquae*, vol. ii., p. 388.
[3] Grove, J., *Life and Times of Wolsey* (1744), vol. iv., p. 230.

advice and quoting Cavendish: "Sir, I beseech you for all the loves there hath been between us, and for the love of God, let men have some right and justice. Take of me some pity and compassion, for I am a poor stranger, born out of your dominions: I have here no unprejudiced counsellor, and I flee to you, as the head of justice within your realm. Alas! alas! wherein have I offended you? I take God and all the world to witness that I have been to you a true, humble, and obedient wife, ever conformable to your will and pleasure. . . . If you have since found any dishonour in my conduct, then am I content to depart, albeit to my great shame and disparagement; but if none there be, then I beseech you, thus lowlily, to let me remain in my proper state. . . ."

The downfall of Wolsey, whom Anne Boleyn had never forgiven for interfering in the matter of her first love with Percy, was a political result of her influence over the King. Subtly she sowed the seed of distrust in his mind, declaring that the Cardinal had done many things to Henry's slander and disgrace, and that Norfolk, or Suffolk, or indeed any other man in his dominions, would have lost his head for less flagrant crimes. Her hostility was so pronounced that Henry taxed her with it, when she boldly replied that she had no cause to be a friend of the Cardinal's, nor had any who were devoted to the King.[1] Her bitter animosity is commented on by Chapuys, or, as he is more commonly called, Capucius, in a letter to the Emperor, dated November 27th, 1530—"The Duke (Norfolk), the lady, and the father had never ceased plotting against the Cardinal, and the lady especially. . . . They say the King has had enough to do to quiet her, and even though he en-

[1] Cavendish, G., *Life of Wolsey*, ed. Singer, vol. i., p. 176.

treated her most affectionately, nothing would satisfy her but the arrest of the Cardinal."[1] This purpose was effected by the uncorroborated evidence of a Venetian physician, who testified that Wolsey had asked the Pope to excommunicate the King if the latter did not dismiss Anne. A short time after Wolsey's downfall she was created Marchioness of Pembroke, and in 1533 was secretly married to the King. Her triumph, however, was short-lived; in 1536 she was brought to trial with Lord Rochford and Henry Norris on a charge of treason, and received her sentence of death with an appeal to a higher tribunal—"Oh, Father! Oh, Creator! Thou, who art the way, the life, the truth, knowest that I have not deserved this death."[2]

Though the times were fraught with danger, more especially to those who took a hand in politics, yet the country held undoubted claims to its title of "Merry England." Tourneys, fêtes, and masques were the order of the day at Court, while the people delighted in their sports and pastimes, and dances on village greens. It is a mistake to think that the Court dances were confined to slow and stately measures, and that the country-dances were held only round the May-pole; though at the same time it is difficult to imagine the ladies of the Elizabethan period, with their elaborate toilets, favouring the romping country-dances, which Chappell asserts were danced in round as well as in parallel lines. King Hal, that lover of good cheer and joviality, went a-Maying with his wives (one at a time, if you please), and his gentlemen often masqueraded in the dress of yeomen, "short coats of Kentish Kendall"; and one and all

[1] Bradford, W., *Charles V . . . Correspondence*, pp. 324-5.
[2] Meteren, E. van, *Hist. des pays bas* (1618), fol. 21.

joined in the May-Day morris dances. Then came the "braule"—or perhaps it should be "branle," from the French word *branler*, which would thus give it the meaning of a jog or shake, the "corranto," and the "galliard," which manifestly signify movements fast and furious.[1] Shakespeare alludes to a pretty custom at the end of a country dance, the man being expected to lead out his partner and kiss her. Kissing, as a *ceremony*, was in vogue during the Tudor period; and though the immorality of the Courts of the Stuarts and Georges undoubtedly encouraged, with some energy, the ancient habit, yet it seems to have declined to a great extent as a *custom*, for we find Venetia Stanley upbraiding Sir Kenelm Digby for his audacity in venturing a kiss after a long absence; and Anne Murray, permitting her lover to kiss her when parting for good, describes the act as "a libertye I never permitted before, nor should then . . . etc."[2]

A rich fund of amusement is afforded by a comparison of the two "Anatomies," the one of "Abuses," the other of "Melancholy." Stubbes, a rigid Calvinist, one who wields the sledge-hammer of denunciation, assigns an assured place in hell to all who favour the worldly joys of the May-pole, the card-table, the dice-box; and as for those who frequent the play-house, they are guilty of every conceivable vice.[3] He has a sweet condemnation of women who give way to the passions of love (surely Queen Elizabeth, with her love of punning, would not have let slip the chance of playing on the words Anatomie and An-

[1] *Temple Bar*, July, 1865, vol. xiv.. p. 145, has a delightful account of the dances of the period.

[2] Godfrey, E., *Social Life under the Stuarts*, p. 23.

[3] Stubbes, P., *Anatomie of Abuses* (1836), p. 166.

athemy), expressing the pious wish that they might be "cauterized, and seared with a hot iron."[1] Burton, on the other hand, favours the dance, subscribing to Lucian, and declaring it "an elegant thing, which cheereth up the mind, delights the spectators, which teacheth many comely gestures, equally affecting the ears, eyes, and soul itself"; and he is evidently attacking the rival "Anatomie" when he goes on to say that there are "many who will not allow men and women to dance together, because it is a provocation to lust; they may as well, with Lycurgus and Mahomet, cut down all vines, forbid the drinking of wine, for that it makes some men drunk."[2]

Leaving the pursuits of grown-up people for a moment in favour of the younger generation, it is a fact worth notice that current politics will often be reflected in children's games. "Prisoners' base" and "French and English" are well known to the present generation, patriotism causing all the bigger boys and girls engaged in the game to represent England, so that defeat should be out of the question. "The Queen against Wyatt" was a favourite game with children at the time of and after Wyatt's rebellion. The urchins fought out their battles valiantly, so much so that on one occasion the game might have ended disastrously, the leader of one band who represented Philip of Spain being very nearly throttled to death by the keen partisanship of his diminutive opponents.[3] The life of a child of this period, however, was very far from being all pleasure. Sir Richard Sackville told the good Roger Ascham that all love of learning

[1] Stubbes, P., *Anatomie of Abuses*, (1836), p. 103.

[2] Burton, *Anatomie of Melancholy* (1845), p. 542; Stubbes, P., *Anatomie of Abuses* (1836), p. 191.

[3] Strickland, A., *Lives of the Queens of England*, vol. ii., p. 606.

had been beaten out of him by the rod, and Queen Elizabeth's preceptor mentions many of his time who were in favour of the maxim "spare the rod and spoil the child."[1] William Harrison, by no means a cruel man, and a clergyman be it remembered, testifies to the habit of beating children, and this in a most delightfully casual way, introducing it into a story descriptive of the sagacity of a dog he possessed. If his master had beaten any of his children, the animal "would gently have assaied to catch the rod in his teeth . . . or else pluck down their clothes to save them from the stripes."[2] Parents evidently did not err on the side of leniency, and girls as well as boys were subjected to this treatment. One day, Roger Ascham found Lady Jane Grey alone with her books, while her friends and relatives were enjoying themselves. On his asking her why she did not join them in their recreation, she explained her studiousness by saying that "one of the greatest benefits that ever God gave me, is, that he sent me so sharp and severe parents, and so gentle a schoolmaster [Mr. Elmer, afterwards Bishop of London]. For when I am in presence of either father or mother; whether I speak, keep silent, sit, stand . . . . I must do it . . . . even so perfectly as God made the world; or else I am so sharply taunted, so cruelly threatened, yea, presently sometimes with pinches, imps, and bobs . . . . without measure misordered, that I think myself in Hell. . . ."[3] Her case is not so cruel as that of Agnes Paston's daughter, who was beaten by her mother twice a day, and "her head broken in two or three places"[4]; but the up-bringing of children of

[1] Ascham, R., *English Works* (1815), pp. 188, 190.
[2] Withington, L., *Elizabethan England;* Furnivall's *Forewords*, p. 18.
[3] Ascham, R., *English Works* (1815), p. 217.
[4] *Paston Letters*, ed. Gairdner (1872), vol. i., intro., p. cxvi.

this period was, without doubt, terribly harsh and cruel.

Immense progress was made in the Tudor period in the general comfort of a home. Just as in matters of dress, which will be treated later, closer intercourse with foreign countries, alluded to in the short account of the *New Learning*, brought improvements in household furniture, until Elizabeth's reign saw "a massy magnificence that agreed with that of the era and the monarch, that went well too with the mighty farthingales and ruffs of the ladies."[1] There were grumblers, however; one who deprecated the introduction of glass windows, and of chimneys, which brought nothing but cold and rheumatism to "tenderlings," and carried off the smoke which in the good old days hardened the timber[2]; yet another grumble spent itself on flock beds and mattresses in lieu of straw pallets and rough mats, and of pillows in place of the good round log.[3] The wives of knights, gentlemen, and merchants furnished their houses with arras, rich hangings of tapestry, Turkey work, pewter, brass, and fine linen; and the floors which used to be covered with tiles, or with straw, sedge, or reeds,[4] were hidden by beautiful carpets. Unfortunately for the women of the day, looking-glasses were rare, and did not come into general use until the time of the Stuarts, though the fashionable belle in the reign of Elizabeth always had a small one hanging from her girdle. The furniture introduced can scarcely be commended on the score of ease, the chairs being high and narrow-backed, with small square seats, but the lady of the house overcame this discomfort by a luxurious use of cushions.

[1] *Harper's Magazine*, Dec. 1877, vol. lvi., p. 18.
[2] Withington, L., *Elizabethan England*, p. 13. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 119.
[4] Harrison, W., *Description of England*, 1877, vol. i., p. 234.

In food and drink the fashions changed, as in other things, and the table made for delicacies. Elizabeth and her Court fed on *manchet* bread, which was made from the very finest wheat grown at Heston.[1] French wines were supplanted by "Rennish" and Spanish sacks, and mine host of the tavern did an amazing trade in them. Men, it should be noted, did not have a monopoly in tavern-keeping, for there was a well-known house in Eastcheap, kept by one Mistress Quickly, who more than held her own with her male rivals.[2] In the country the women of the household were adepts in the art of brewing; and Harrison, "scarce a good maltster," and a poor man on £40 a year, left the brewing of his beer entirely to his wife and her maid, who managed to turn out two hundred gallons at a cost of twenty shillings.[3]

Of the value of money at that time much insight can be gained from the details of accounts[4] which have come down to us, and which furnish to our present-day ideas quaint reading.

In the inventory of a husbandman's goods and chattels, his dame's best gown is put down at 10s.; her old gown, 5s.; a kyrtell of Russett, 9s.; two kyrtells of Fusten, 9s.; her best petticoat, 4s.; and an old petticoat, 1s. And the accounts of a grocer named Stoddart, who was evidently a man of a generous disposition, show that he gave one Avyes Cox for her taffeta gown, 1s. 9d.; the nurse of his godchild Violet, 1s. 4d.; the midwife, 1s.; and a man called Walker "in his purse when he went to Maidstone to release" certain prisoners, £1. But more important than these

[1] Norden, J., *Description of Middlesex*, 1723, p. 25.

[2] Hall, H., *Society in the Elizabethan Age*, p. 78.

[3] Withington, L., *Elizabethan England;* Furnivall's *Forewords*, p. 18.

[4] Hall, H., *Society in the Elizabethan Age*, pp. 40, 159, 206.

is the information touching the wife's dower. Elizabeth Darrell, the mother of William Darrell, "received as a reasonable dower the modest annuity of almost £40 (£300) a year in land," which was secured to her thanks to Magna Charta and to her official connections.[1] When Sir Francis Walsingham married Ursula, the widow of Robert Worsley, he covenanted with her brother-in-law, Sir John Worsley, that he would settle lands to the yearly value of one hundred marks on the lady, and in addition conveyed to Sir John Worsley other property for her further advancement, together with security for £500 in plate to be bequeathed by him to his wife.[2] In many cases, according to immemorial custom, the widow succeeded the deceased tenant.

We will now shift the scene, and quit the little, yet important things of the life of the age to consider matters which were mixed up with the destiny of the nation.

Henry's sixth wife, Katharine Parr, the first Protestant Queen of England, who was a widow when he married her, and who eventually survived him, had her future high estate foretold while yet a girl.[3] After the mode set by Sir Thomas More, her parents gave her an excellent education, which she turned to account by composing psalms and prayers, and by furthering the studies of her step-children, Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth, and of their cousins, Jane and Katharine Grey. "Her great zeal for the Reformation, and earnest desire to have the Scriptures understood by the common people,"[4] prompted her, at her own

[1] Hall, H., *Society in the Elizabethan Age*, pp. 4, 6.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 195.
[3] Strype, J., *Memorials*, vol. ii., part i., p. 206.
[4] Ballard, G., *Memoirs of British Ladies* (1775), pp. 61, 65.

expense, to have Erasmus' *Paraphrase on the New Testament* translated into English for the service of the public. It is probable that Edward VI imbibed the principles of Protestantism from his stepmother and from his governess, Lady Bacon, "a choice lady, exquisitely skilled in the Greek, Latin, and Italian tongues,"[1] who was later, in spite of her religion, appointed one of the ladies of Mary's bedchamber, and always held by her in the highest esteem.

Under the guidance, during her girlhood, of the Countess of Salisbury, Mary had advanced rapidly in learning, and was especially accomplished in music. Taught from her infancy to entertain, she kept a small court of her own at Ludlow Castle. Her parents doted on her, Henry actually refusing to part with her when Charles V requested that she should be sent to Spain to be brought up fitly as his future wife. This engagement was abruptly broken by the Emperor on being informed that Henry contemplated a divorce from Katharine; it was to avenge this insult that Mary's father tried, but unsuccessfully, to marry her to Francis I of France. Her mother favoured a match with Reginald Pole, but he made himself ineligible by boldly expressing an opinion against the contemplated divorce. Her life after her mother's degradation was a most unhappy one. The settlement of the Crown on Anne and her heirs; the changes in the line of succession; the declaration of illegitimacy of Elizabeth as well as of Mary; the acknowledgment of illegitimacy frightened out of the latter by Cromwell; all these things, so well-known, need only bare mention. The point to be noted is that, in the midst of her troubles, she remained the idol of the people. On one occasion,

[1] Ballard, G., *Memoirs of British Ladies* (1775), p. 132.

when she was visiting her brother during the latter days of his reign, an enormous gathering of influential people vied with one another to do her honour,[1] conspicuous among them being the Duchesses of Northumberland and of Suffolk, the Lady Marchioness of Northampton, the Countesses of Bedford, Shrewsbury, and Arundel. In the face of this popularity, the ambition of Northumberland and of the Duke and the Duchess of Suffolk set up a rival to the throne in the person of Lady Jane Grey, whom Northumberland had married to his son Lord Guilford Dudley.

There are three instances of Mary's clemency during the early days of her power, all the more remarkable in that her reign is notorious for the blood shed during the latter part of it. On the suppression of Northumberland's revolt, the Duke of Suffolk and his daughter were committed to the Tower, but the former was almost immediately liberated through the intercession of his wife. There is, however, no record of any pleading on the part of the Duchess on behalf of her daughter, although she had taken an active part in Jane's marriage and in her short-lived regality.[2] In the second instance, Wyatt's confession, after the failure of his rebellion, implicated Elizabeth and Courtenay, Earl of Devonshire, one of those whom Mary had released from the Tower. The utmost pressure was brought to bear upon the Queen to induce her to put her sister to death. In the face of a mass of treasonable correspondence, she declared that she wanted "open proof." Renaud, the Spanish ambassador, went so far as to deny the possibility of a marriage with Philip unless Elizabeth were exe-

[1] Machyn, H., *Diary*, ed. J. G. Nichols, p. 30.
[2] *Ibid.*, *Diary*, p. 35.

cuted;[1] and though Mary had set her heart on the Spanish match, she remained firm and spared her sister's life, in spite of the ambassador's threats. In the third case, after her triumphal entry into London —a gorgeous pageant, the Queen being dressed "in a gown of purple velvet, furred with powdered ermins" —her first Parliament passed a bill of attainder against Lady Jane; Mary immediately granted a reprieve, and Lady Jane was committed into safe keeping. It was only after the suppression of Wyatt's rebellion that the Queen, yielding to the importunities of her advisers, consented to Lady Jane's execution. This unfortunate woman, not yet out of her teens, the tool of ambitious relatives, "fully satisfied of the truth and purity of the Protestant faith,"[2] bade farewell from the scaffold in the following simple words: "Good people, I am come hither to die, and by a law I am condemned to the same. My offence against the Queen's highness was only in consent to the device of other(s) . . . which now is deemed treason; but it was never of my seeking . . . I do wash my hands in innocence thereof before God."[3] The pathos of her position deeply affected those who surrounded the scaffold, and even the executioner asked forgiveness for the blow which was to end her life.

Lady Jane Grey was among those who took advantage of the facilities given to learning by the use of the printing press, which had been introduced into England by Caxton, and by the use of linen paper in preference to the more expensive parchment. Ballard, who pays tribute not only to her mind, but also to her

[1] Tytler, P. F., *England under Edward VI and Mary* (1839), vol. ii., p. 320.

[2] Ballard, G., *Memoirs of British Ladies* (1775), p. 71.

[3] Holinshed, R., *Chronicles* (1808), vol. iv., p. 23.

heart, says she was "not more distinguished by her descent than by her extraordinary accomplishments. . . ." And again, she was possessed of "such sweetness of temper and such innate goodness of heart. . . ."[1]

Surely the women of the Suffolk family must hold a record for misfortunes. The ambition of Frances, Duchess of Suffolk, contributed to her downfall; but nothing could be urged against her daughters, Mary and Katharine, except the crime of possessing royal blood and the misdemeanour of making stolen marriages. Lady Mary, after her marriage, was committed to the charge of Sir Thomas Gresham, the founder of the Royal Exchange, which was opened by Elizabeth in person. The prosperous merchant was put to much discomfort by the presence of his fair lodger, for "the charms which had seduced the official gravity of the Sergeant Porter were viewed with jealous eyes by Gresham's lady."[2] The death of the head of this unfortunate family is thus mentioned by one historian.[3] She "left her wretched life . . . her daughter, the Lady Jane, proclaimed Queen of England, and soon after beheaded; her husband shortly after taken away by the same death; the Lady Katharine, her second daughter . . . divorced and now shut up in the Tower . . . and she herself, forgetting the nobility of her lineage, had married Adrian Stokes, a mean gentleman, to her dishonour."

Before Courtenay became involved in treasonable schemes, he had been selected by Gardiner and the English people as the most suitable husband for their Queen, but from the outset Mary's choice had fallen

[1] Ballard, G., *Memoirs of British Ladies* (1775), p. 70.
[2] Camden, W., *History of Elizabeth* (1688), p. 69.
[3] Hall, H., *Society in the Elizabethan Age*, p. 62

on Philip of Spain, and she told Commendone, the Spanish ambassador, that nothing would make her swerve from her purpose.[1] Parliament sent her their speaker with a petition "that the Queen would not marry a stranger or a foreigner"; this caused a passage of arms between Mary and Gardiner, whom she accused of being the prime mover in the matter. He admitted that he was partial to Courtenay; "he had known him in the Tower." Mary retorted that that was no reason for her marrying him. In repeated interviews with Renaud, she assured him of her fixed resolve[2]; and in July, 1554, by marrying the husband of her choice, she alienated the affections of her people; and before the year was out, the end of her religious labours was attained when she and Philip, with both houses of Parliament, knelt before Cardinal Pole, the Pope's legate, who "restored them to the communion of Holy Church."

After this it is not surprising to find her ordering Gardiner to suppress the *Paraphrases of Erasmus*, which had been translated in her father's time, and set up in the churches by Cranmer.[3] As regards the fanatical bigotry which countenanced the deaths of Hooper, Ridley, Latimer, Cranmer, and many others who were condemned to be burnt, Ballard shifts the onus from the Queen on to her advisers, saying: "Many Protestants seem to think that in herself, abstracted from her erroneous opinions, and from her bloody councillors, she was of a compassionate and humane disposition." Certainly, her clemency at the beginning of her reign upholds this opinion. "Pity it is," he continues, "that she blemished her

[1] Tytler, P. F., *England under Edward VI and Mary* (1839), vol. ii., p. 238.

[2] Froude, J. A., *History of England* (1870), vol. vi., p. 118 *seq.*

[3] Burnet, G., *History of the Reformation* (1880), vol. ii., p. 750.

reign and character by so vast an effusion of blood, which was poured forth like water in most parts of the kingdom."[1] Religious bigotry, in fact, caused her to regard the atrocities as needing no justification.

Before proceeding to some account of Elizabeth, it will be well to give a description of the elaborate toilet and fanciful appearance of the fashionable woman of her period. She is, of course, condemned in no uncertain terms by the rigid Calvinist[2] who accuses the people of England of being the proudest in the world, "so curious in new fangles," and caring for nothing that did not come beyond the seas: apparel and pride, in his opinion, being the mother and daughter of mischief, and so closely connected "as the one can hardly be divorced from the other." Harrison[3] also comments on this craze for new modes; the Spanish guise would be adopted, then "French toys are most fine and delectable"; these in their turn would be supplanted by Morisco gowns and Barbarian fleeces; and finally, French breeches, in the case of the men, "make such a comely vesture that, except it were a dog in a doublet, you shall not see any so disguised as my countrymen of England." The staring attire, which in the old days was considered meet only for "light housewives," was become a habit for "sober matrons"; and the younger wives of citizens and burgesses, following the lead set by fashion, indulged in such gross extravagance, both in attire and housekeeping, that they could not make both ends meet.

In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Falstaff, addressing Mrs. Ford, mentions two forms of head-dress: "Thou hast the right arched bent of the brow, that

[1] Ballard, G., *Memoirs of British Ladies* (1775), pp. 94, 95.
[2] Stubbes, P., *Anatomie of Abuses* (1836), pp. 15, 31.
[3] Harrison, W., *Description of England* (1877), vol. i., pp. 167, 170, 172.

becomes the ship-tire, the tire valiant. . . ." The former of these was an open flaunting head-dress, with ribbons floating in the air like streamers[1]—

With ribbons pendant flaring 'bout her head.

The tire-valiant was a head-dress still more ostentatious. The "French Hood," another favourite of the time, made of gauze or muslin, reached from the back of the head over the forehead, the hair on either side of it being left exposed. The wives of citizens, as a rule, wore a velvet cap, and sometimes the "Minever" cap, with white and three-cornered peaks, about three inches high. There was a wonderful selection of hues to choose from, the more fantastic being peas-porridge tawny, popinjay blue, lusty gallant, and devil-in-the-head.[2]

Beneath such head-dresses as these the ladies were not satisfied with their own hair.[3] An excellent business was done in the selling of false locks, and where any particular shade of hair took my lady's fancy, she immediately set to work to persuade the natural owner, if poor, to part with it for a consideration. Then followed "the trimming and tricking" of the head, the hair being "curled, frisled, and crisped, laid out on wreathes and borders" from ear to ear. Shakespeare talks of locks taken from "the skull that bred them in the sepulchre,"[4] and Stubbes mentions the case of a very enterprising beauty who, meeting a little child with lovely fair hair, inveigled her into a house by promising her a penny, and cut off her hair.[5] When Elizabeth's red hair failed her, she

[1] Drake, N., *Shakespeare and His Times* (1817), vol. ii., pp. 94, 95.

[2] Harrison, W., *Description of England* (1877), vol. i., p. 172.

[3] *Blackwood's Magazine*, August, 1818, vol. iii., p. 534, contains an admirable description of the beau and belle of the period.

[4] Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*, iii. 2.

[5] Stubbes, P., *Anatomie of Abuses* (1836), p. 61.

resorted to a red wig,[1] which at once became fashionable. This necessitated the painting of cheeks to tone down the contrast, "oils, liquors, and unguentes being used with no sparing hand." The result cannot have been particularly pleasing.

The following lines appear in the work of a satirist of the day[2]:

> These painted faces which they wear,
> Can any tell from whence they came?

Masks made of velvet were liberally patronized, and enormous earrings, with precious stones, were worn, The ruffs round ladies' necks, says Drake, "attained in stiffness, fineness, and dimensions the most extravagant pitch of absurdity"; and Stubbes has a few words for the starch with which they stiffened them: "One arch or pillar, wherewith the devil's kingdom of great ruffs is underpropped, is a certain kind of liquid matter which they call starch."[3] Their bosoms were uncovered, for when Hentzner first saw Elizabeth, in her old age, she having set this example, he describes her as having "a face oblong, fair, but wrinkled; her bosom uncovered, as all the English ladies have it till they marry."[4] The pointed waist of their gowns was unduly long, and the favourite petticoat the enormous farthingale. Their dresses were often ornamented with aglets or ornamental hoops, which could be moved from gown to gown. Their shoes had very high heels, and silk stockings had just been introduced. Add to all this huge fans, a small looking-glass hanging from the girdle, an abundance of bracelets, necklaces, and in short all kinds of jewellery, and the picture is complete.

[1] Hentzner, P., *Travels in England* (1797), p. 34.
[2] Drake, N., *Shakespeare and His Times* (1817), vol. ii., p. 95.
[3] Stubbes, P., *Anatomie of Abuses* (1836), p. 40.
[4] Rye, W. B., *England as seen by Foreigners* (1865), p. 104.

"Why," says Burton, "do they decorate themselves with artificial flowers, the various colours of herbs, needleworks of exquisite skill . . . and perfume their persons, crown themselves with gold and silver . . . deck themselves with pendants, bracelets, earrings, chains, girdles, rings, pins, spangles, etc.? Why do they make such glaring shows with their scarfs, feathers, fans, masks, furs, laces, tiffanies, ruffs, falls, calls, cuffs, etc.? . . . And when they are disappointed they dissolve into tears . . . weep with one eye, laugh with the other, or as children weep and cry, they can both together. . . . And," adds the analyst, "*as much pity is to be taken of a woman weeping as of a goose going barefoot.*"[1]

Michele, the Venetian ambassador at the English Court, describes Queen Elizabeth as "a lady of great elegance, both of body and mind, though her face may be called pleasant rather than beautiful. She is tall and well made, her complexion fine, though rather sallow. Her eyes, but above all her hands, which she takes care not to conceal, are of superior beauty. In her knowledge of the Greek and Italian languages she surpasses the queen (Mary). . . . Her wit and understanding are admirable, as she has proved by her conduct in the midst of suspicion and danger. . . ." According to Sir Robert Naunton, she was tall and well favoured, but high-nosed, of fair complexion and neat features, with a stately carriage; of a *debonnaire* and affable manner which endeared her to the love of her people.[2] These last words provide an important clue to those who study the character of the great queen. In all her processions and public outings she

[1] Burton, *Anatomie of Melancholy* (1845), p. 525.

[2] Naunton, R., *Fragmenta Regalia*, p. 15; Arber (1870), *English Reprints*.

MARY STUART IN HER WIDOW'S DRESS
FROM A DRAWING IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

moulded her conduct to the wishes of her people, being careful to act such parts as they would approve of. "If ever any person had either the gift or the style to win the hearts of people, it was this queen."[1] Ballard talks of her as worthy to be compared with the greatest monarchs that ever reigned, "with a genius as much superior to the common race of mortals as in her station she was raised above them; and, indeed, she fell into times that required no less a degree of understanding."[2]

Both Elizabeth and her great rival, Mary, Queen of Scots, were ambitious and gifted women. The latter "was more graceful, more winning, with greater subtlety and quickness. Elizabeth was more imperious, more cautious, with greater foresight and prudence." Both of them were unscrupulous, and ready to sacrifice everything to their plans; but there was this one great difference between them: while Mary worked for a purely selfish end and her own advancement, the English Queen identified herself in all her interests with her subjects.

The Queen of Scots was not only proficient in the modern languages, and in Latin, like most of her contemporary compeers, but was an adept in music, dancing, riding, and embroidering. Accustomed to the chivalry and gaiety of the French Court, she entered Scotland to receive the generous but rough loyalty of entire strangers. Widowed at an early age, she was made the tool of her French relatives in their designs against England, overcoming all difficulties until her passionate impulses got the better of her saner judgment. Her marriage with Darnley, seeing that it strengthened her claims to the English throne,

[1] Hayward, J., *Annals of Elizabeth* (1840), pp. 2, 3.
[2] Ballard, G., *Memoirs of British Ladies* (1775), p. 147.

increased Elizabeth's animosity against her; her marriage with Bothwell, the murderer of her husband, brought upon her the odium even of those who had formerly espoused her cause.

Apart from royal women, who naturally absorb a considerable amount of attention, this period was prolific of female celebrities who have left their mark on the history of the time. Space will only permit of the cursory mention of a few of these. Anne, daughter of Sir Edward Stanhope, was the second wife of the Protector Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset. She is described as a woman of great pride, and being the wife of the regent had the audacity to dispute the question of precedence with Katharine Parr, who was then but the dowager of a deceased King. This it was which was supposed to have originally caused the estrangement between the two Seymours, and most of the Duke's misfortunes. Surrey's ode, "On a lady who refused to dance with him," was levelled at this haughty duchess, who, knowing the want of cordiality that existed between him and her husband, had flung back with scorn the attention he tried to pay her. She too, like her husband, was sent to the Tower, and after his death she married his steward Francis Newdigate. There was, again, Lettice Knollys, who became Countess of Essex and afterwards Countess of Leicester, to whose moral reputation report was not over kind. At first her second marriage was kept a secret, but the Queen's jealousy continued after the avowal of the marriage, and even after the Countess's son, the Earl of Essex, was high in royal favour. When, however, the latter fell into disgrace, his mother's access to Court was entirely stopped, though Elizabeth accepted her presents. Some of these

MARY SIDNEY, COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE

FROM AN ENGRAVING

presents were no doubt intended to soften the royal heart towards the unlucky Essex, for we find that when he was already a prisoner, "the Lady Lester sent the Queen a rich new year's gift, which was very well taken." Again, soon after, we find that "My Lady Lester had now in hand a gown she will send to the Queen, which will cost her £100 at least." The presentation of this famous gown is thus related: "Yesterday the Cowntess of Leicester sent the Queen a most curious fine gown, which was presented by my Lady Skudmore. Her Majestie liked yt well, but did not accept it, nor refuse yt, only answered that, things standing as they did, yt was not fitt for her to desire what she did . . ." and the Queen set her face against granting Essex his liberty.[1]

Then, again, there was Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, who was reckoned in her day as the embodiment of all that was good and beautiful and learned. Though she shone mainly by the lustre derived from her brother Sir Philip Sidney, her own merits were great; and she was "the presiding spirit of 'the Arcadia' of Sidney, the patroness of Daniel, the lyric poet, the sweet translator of the Psalms, and the mother of William, Earl of Pembroke, celebrated by Clarendon for his many virtues." She was acquainted with Spenser, who celebrated her as—

> Urania, sister unto Astrophel
> In whose brave mind, as in a golden coffer,
> All heavenly gifts and riches locked are,
> More rich than pearls of Ind or gold of Ophir,
> And in her sex more wonderful and rare.
> (*Colin Clout's Come Home Again.*)

In matters of courtship, Elizabeth's character was clearly defined. Her coquetry, vanity, and love of

[1] *Sidney Papers*, ii., p. 174.

admiration were never suppressed, yet they stopped short of any act that might imperil the safety of her beloved kingdom. Her marriage question was a most complicated one. On the one hand, if she remained single Mary of Scotland would succeed to the throne; on the other hand, by marrying, she might place herself at a disadvantage with her rival, at a time when the latter was a widow. When the estates petitioned her to marry, she replied with typical vagueness that she would promise nothing except to refrain from any deed that might be prejudicial to the country.[1] Her suitors were legion, including Charles, Archduke of Austria, the Duke of Holstein, the King of Sweden, Sir William Pickering, the Earl of Arundel, the Duke of Anjou, the Earl of Leicester, and even Philip II.

In 1559, Jewel wrote that "public opinion inclines towards Sir William Pickering, a wise and religious man, and highly gifted as to personal qualities."[2] A short time after, the same correspondent informed Peter Martyr that "the Swede and Charles, the son of the Emperor, are courting at a most marvellous rate. But the Swede is most in earnest, for he promises mountains of silver in case of success. The lady, however, is probably thinking of an alliance nearer home."[3] One of her most delicate games was played with Philip, who announced to Feria, his ambassador, his intention of sacrificing himself for the good of the Catholic religion. The Pope at this time, it will be remembered, was very aggressive; he pronounced Elizabeth illegitimate, and declared that, his consent being necessary before she

[1] Camden, W., *History of Elizabeth*, (1688), p. 26.
[2] *Zurich Letters*, (1842), p. 34; Parker Society.
[3] *Ibid.*

could ascend the throne, she must submit her claim to him. An acknowledgment of the Pope's power of absolution meant an admission of her illegitimacy. There could not have been the remotest chance of her accepting this suitor, yet her coquetry and fine sense of diplomacy made her continue the game to the utmost limit.

The Queen's heart was undoubtedly in her courtship with Robert Dudley. Whilst making a tool of him in warding off the attentions of other suitors, she encouraged him in her inordinate vanity and love of admiration. She could not restrain herself from showing him marked favour in public, "putting her hand in his neck," as Melville says, "which was a great freedom to be taken by a lady of thirty."[1] The Earl of Arundel and his son-in-law, the Duke of Norfolk, taxed Dudley with going beyond his office as Master of the Horse, and of acting as a lady of the bed-chamber; they even went so far as to accuse him of "kissing her majesty, without being invited thereto"[2]; and when, "in respect of his own hopes"[3] he opposed the negotiations for her marriage with Charles, the brother of the Emperor Maximilian, he was dubbed by Sussex "the new upstart." Dudley was not, however, allowed unlimited license. On one occasion, when a follower of his was refused admittance to the privy-chamber, he threatened reprisals, but the Queen vented her anger on him in very plain language: "God's death! my lord, I have wished you well; but my favour is not so locked up in you that others shall not participate thereof. . . . I will have here but *one mistress*, and *no master*."[4]

[1] Melville, J., *Memoirs*, p. 94.
[2] La Mothe Fénelon. *Corres. dipl.*, vol. ii., p. 120.
[3] Camden, W., *History of Elizabeth* (1688), p. 79.
[4] Naunton, R., *Fragmenta Regalia*, p. 17.

The scandals current at Court concerning the death of Amy Robsart, Dudley's wife, were even circulated on the Continent. Throckmorton, the English ambassador at Paris, wrote: "The bruits be so brim and so maliciously reported here touching the marriage of the lord Robert and the death of his wife, that I know not where to turn me"[1]; and another authority says that "he so far flattered himself in these ambitious views as to procure his first lady to be got out of the way, by having her neck broke in a fall down stairs."[2]

Elizabeth's courtship with the Duke of Anjou is the most futile of her many matrimonial intrigues. Shortly after the marriage of Charles IX of France, the Queen informed her Council that, to the inquiries of Cardinal de Chastillon she had replied "that she was free to marry, that she would not marry one of her subjects; and that she would, with all her heart, enter into a marriage with Monsieur [Anjou]."[3] When the time came for Anjou to fulfil his part of the agreement he refused to marry her, making slighting remarks about her age and a sore leg from which she was suffering. There was, it is true, something the matter with her leg at the time, but she wittily remarked to Fénelon that even "if she were lame, France and Scotland would find that her affairs did not halt."[4] Anjou's obstinacy was soon overcome; and when Charles and Catharine de Medici proposed in due form for Elizabeth's hand, she accepted the proposal with seeming gladness.[5] Then began the usual hesitation and quibbling, until the Queen's vanity received a severe shock at the news that her

[1] Hardwicke, *State Papers*, vol. i., p. 121.
[2] Nichols, J., *Progresses of Elizabeth* (1823), vol. ii., p. 61.
[3] La Mothe Fénelon, *Corres. dipl.* (1838), vol. viii., p. 439.
[4] *Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 459 *seq.*
[5] *Ibid.*, vol. iv., p. 58.

royal lover preferred Mary of Scotland to herself. This was too much for her self-esteem. At a later date she contemplated marriage with his younger brother. For this prince she appears to have had a genuine, if slightly contemptuous, regard. There followed a struggle between her heart and her head, between her prudence and her inclinations; but she finally yielded to the entreaties of her ministers, and sacrificed her personal whim to the welfare of her country.

One of the best known romances of the day was that between the youthful Philip Sidney, the most accomplished gentleman of his times, and Lady Penelope Devereux; but the course of true love did not run smoothly, the lovers being too poor to defy authority. Sidney married the heiress Frances Walsingham, while Lady Penelope was given by her guardians to the wealthy Lord Rich. In the eighth song of *Astrophel and Stella*, which was written on the eve of Sidney's marriage, his love-story with Lady Penelope is charmingly sketched:

> Him great harms had taught *much care*,
> Her faire necke a *foule yoke* bare;
> But her sight his cares did banish,
> In his sight her yoke did vanish.

Stella's answer to her lover's pleading contains, perhaps, the choicest lines of the song:

> Trust me while I thee deny,
> In my selfe the smart I try;
> Tyran *honour* thus doth use thee,
> *Stella's selfe* might not refuse thee.

Sidney's marriage brought him but little happiness; to find his ideal of womanhood, he turned from his wife to his sister, the Countess of Pembroke, and

gave his romantic imagination free scope in writing her *Arcadia*.[1]

Wild Darrell, the Wiltshire squire, immortalized in the ballad of "The Friar of Orders Grey," was the hero of another well-known romance. He suffered greatly through his love for Lady Anna Hungerford, but he was "amply repaid by the tender love and noble constancy expressed in her letters to him." The divorce case, the outcome of their devotion, furnished a scandal which amused the gossips for many a day. The lady's father stood by her stoutly, and Leicester supported her. Meanwhile, Darrell's innumerable enemies attacked him on a charge of murder; escape was only possible by the promise of the enormous bribe of £3000 to the grasping Pembroke, the Lord-Lieutenant of the county; and when Pembroke pressed for payment, Darrell sacrificed his Wiltshire estates and fled to the Court. There are certain things which never change from age to age. In reading the evidence of a servant in the Hungerford-Darrell divorce suit, one might imagine a court in the twentieth century—"Then he went to my lady's chamber door, and there harkening heard Mr. Darrell and my Lady. . . . Whereupon he called Alice Cleck, in the nursery chamber going to bed, who came forth unto him and they two went together to my Lady's chamber and secretly conveyed themselves into the chamber behind the portals and the hangings of the chamber, where they heard and saw the said Darrell and Lady. . . ."[2] Substitute a keyhole for the hangings of the chamber, and we are in modern times.

In contrast with these two cases of "sorrowful joy,"

[1] Hall, H., *Society in the Elizabethan Age*, pp. 90, 91, 165-6.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 13, 243.

the daughter of Sir John Spencer, the wealthy Lord Mayor, was the heroine of an escapade which resulted in the lovers living "together happily ever after." Lord Compton had carried off the heiress, "concealed in a baker's basket," from her father's house without his knowledge, and naturally without his consent. Her father disinherited her, and the lovers applied to Elizabeth for help. Accordingly, the Queen asked the Lord Mayor to be godfather to a boy to whom she was standing godmother, the child of a couple who had married for love. Spencer accepted willingly, saying that "as he had no heir, he should adopt the child." The Queen gave the child the name of Spencer, and after the ceremony informed the Lord Mayor of the trick that had been played on him. This pretty piece of intervention resulted in a happy reconciliation between father and daughter.[1]

Everything in Elizabeth's power was done to increase both the happiness and welfare of her people. The debased, or, as Camden puts it, "brass" coin of the realm was called in, and coins of sterling value substituted. By her orders gunpowder was manufactured for the first time in England. Literature and learning were encouraged; the theatre became an institution, and the Sovereign herself was a patroness of the drama and of Shakespeare. Chance has to be thanked for helping to give the world the fruits of this man's genius—a genius which fructified under straitened circumstances and adverse domestic conditions. Anne Hathaway, the wife of Shakespeare, was his senior by eight years, and the daughter of a "substantial yeoman in the neighbourhood of Stratford." By his will Richard Hathaway, after assigning his farm to his wife and eldest son, bequeathed to Agnes

[1] Drummond, *History of Noble British Families* (1846), vol. i., p. 14.

(assumed to be Anne) £6. 13s. 4d., "to be paid at the day of her marriage." It was soon after her father's death that Anne became the wife of Shakespeare, a step which was probably forced on him by her friends, as she became a mother within six months. Their family life, overshadowed by pecuniary embarrassment, was apparently not a happy one, and, in his pursuit after a livelihood, husband and wife saw little of each other for eleven years. Records of the period have but one reference of her, as the borrower of forty shillings from Thomas Whittington, who had formerly been her father's shepherd. The latter in his will directs that the money should be recovered from the poet and distributed to the poor of Stratford. Of her daughters, the elder, Susanna, Mrs. Hall, had Queen Henrietta Maria billeted on her for three days at New Place. An inscription over her tombstone describes her as "witty above her sex." The younger daughter married Thomas Quiney, a vintner by trade.[1]

The capricious and wayward Elizabeth, it will have been noticed, exercised her favours in truly regal fashion where her own personal whims were concerned. Raleigh's marriage with the beautiful Elizabeth Throckmorton, one of his Sovereign's maids of honour, brought him into great disfavour. His bride was summarily dismissed from Court, and the bridegroom was never again allowed entry into the royal presence. . . . A remark, *en passant*—one cannot help noticing the popularity, during this period, of three particular names: Elizabeth, Mary, and Katherine.

A deep and enduring friendship, on the other hand, existed between Lady Norris and her royal mistress. The former was "keeper of Queen Elizabeth whilst in restraint under her sister, and civil unto her in those

[1] *Dictionary of National Biography*, art. "Shakespeare."

dangerous days."[1] Since that time Elizabeth had shown great gratitude to the family, and in terms of loving familiarity spoke of and to her particular friend as "her dear crow," a nickname suggested by Lady Norris's black hair. The words "My own Crow" began a beautiful letter of sympathy which the Queen penned to her friend on receiving news of the death of one of her sons.

With her scrupulous care to maintain her popularity with the people, Elizabeth was not forgetful of those minor duties which custom had sanctioned. The keeping of Maundy was one of these, when she washed the feet of twenty poor women, and made a present of a gown to each one, the royal robe in which she officiated being among the gifts. After drinking to each woman out of a new white cup, she made her a present of it. The ceremony closes with a donation, to some two thousand of the poor, of silver coins of the value of twopence.[2]

But for the tragic occasion on which it was preached, Dr. White's sermon at the burial of Queen Mary would be one of the most humorous episodes of the reign. Although Elizabeth was present at the interment, the Bishop had the temerity to compare the living with the dead Sovereign. and in a resigned tone ended his comparison by saying—*Melior est canis vivus leone mortuo.*[3] It is scarcely matter for wonder that the new Queen put the Bishop under arrest.

The death of Mary, Queen of Scots, planned by Elizabeth's ministers, roused the Queen's indignation. This was not a magnificent piece of acting, as sometimes supposed, but came from the heart; affairs of

[1] Fuller, *Worthies of England* (Oxfordshire), vol. iii., pp. 16–18.
[2] Strickland, A., *Lives of the Queens of England*, vol. iii., p. 144.
[3] Harrington, H., *Nugae Antiquae* (1804), vol. ii., p. 85.

State, however, were too intricate to allow the dismissal of those who had deceived her. When the news of Mary's death reached Pope Sixtus V, he observed with dry humour: "It is a pity that Elizabeth and I cannot marry each other. Our children would have gained mastery over the whole world."

The Tudor period, which witnessed one of the turning-points of European history, and which rendered possible the strength of modern imperial England, may be fittingly closed by a reference to the wonderful enthusiasm of the women of England during the Spanish war which ended in the destruction of the Armada, women who rivalled the men in their patriotism and zeal. Then it was that the Lady Cholmondeley, "the bold lady of Cheshire," was the recipient of an extraordinary favour at the hands of her Sovereign, who gave her the accolade of knighthood as a reward for her loyal and encouraging speeches.[1]

Of Elizabeth, the great type of the period, the following lines of an epitaph are a just appreciation:

> Witnesse this trophie of insulting Death;
> England's great Empresse, Queen Elizabeth;
> Speake envie 'selfe, and envie will confesse
> The World ne'er saw so rare an Emperesse.[2]

[1] Nichols, J., *Progresses of James I* (1828), vol. iii., p. 406.
[2] *Ibid.*, *Progresses of Elizabeth* (1823), vol. ii., p. 651.

ENGLISH WOMEN IN THE STUART PERIOD

THE earlier Stuart sovereigns tried to maintain the personal rule of the Tudors; but the power of the people asserted itself against the monarchy. A new freedom of thought gave them the consciousness of strength, and encouraged the creed that the King, no longer all-powerful, owed his sovereignty to their will and derived his power from their approval and support. Whether it was due or not to this freedom of thought and the consciousness of power among the King's subjects, it is a fact that science, art, and literature in this age made immense progress, which has ever since been unbrokenly continued.

A queen, more especially one who reigns alone, very often typifies the women of her country. From her they gain a conscious dignity. For this reason alone the women of England must have deeply mourned the death of Elizabeth. In spite, however, of a succession of kings up to the latter part of this period, we find the women of England a growing power, to be reckoned with in politics, striving towards emancipation, beginning to take a grip of literature, not lastingly or as a body affected by the vicious atmosphere of the Court, and stamping their influence on the acts, thoughts, and spirit of the period. Elizabeth Godfrey's

complimentary words can be applied with as much truth to them as to the men who, in a time of incessant action, would naturally present a more vivid picture to the public gaze. "There is a decided preponderance of noble ideals of conduct, of a high standard of family life, of loyalty both to friends and to the chosen cause, whether it were church or throne, or popular rights and liberties, and a singular spirit of self-sacrifice."[1]

The Stuart times are particularly rich in chronicles, histories, and memoirs, and we are chiefly indebted to women for the knowledge that we have acquired of the home life.[2]

At times, however, the feminine pen scratched at the very heart of politics, and the letters that passed between Olivia Porter and her husband Endymion—apart from the pictures of a noble love, of the pursuits of their children, of their hopes and aspirations—furnish an accurate account of Prince Charles's attempt to marry the Infanta of Spain, of his success in making Henrietta Maria of France his queen, and of the drastic consequences that ensued.

Despite a marvellous display of patience on the part of Charles and his embassy, the Spanish people refused to allow the Infanta to marry a heretic prince. Her confessor's argument, more strong than elegant, described the feelings of the whole nation. "What a comfortable bedfellow you will have! He who lies by your side and will be the father of your children is certain to go to Hell."[3]

Though this marriage scheme failed, Charles ended by marrying a Roman Catholic princess, and it is no

[1] Elizabeth Godfrey, *Social Life under the Stuarts*, p. 10.

[2] *Lady Fanshawe's Memoirs; Anne Murray's Memoirs; Memoirs of Lucy Hutchinson; Letters of Dorothy Osborne;* etc.

[3] Gardiner, *Puritan Revolution* p. 41.

exaggeration to say that this was the primary cause of the Rebellion, owing to the influence which Henrietta Maria exercised not only over Charles, but over those, and among them many women, with whom she came in contact.

To quote Howell's own words: "There arrived a most noble new Queen of England who, in true beauty, is beyond the long-wooed Infanta, for she is of a fading flaxen hair . . . but this daughter of France is of a far more lovely and lasting complexion of a dark brown." Devoted to his Queen, "a bold and determined woman, who aspired to direct councils and to lead armies," Charles allowed himself to be influenced by her in every way. He "saw with her eyes and determined by her judgment; and did not only pay her this adoration, but desired that all men should know that he was swayed by her. . . ." And in 1640 we find the Scots complaining, in a petition to the King, "of the excess of the Queen's power which in respect of her religion . . . ought not to prevail so much upon the King as it did in all affairs."[1]

It was inevitable that the Queen's influence, with her Roman Catholic entourage, should have far-reaching effects and gain several adherents to her Church.[2] The King was powerless to restrain her recklessness and indiscretion, and on one occasion she would not be denied the pleasure of publicly parading a number of distinguished converts at a grand Christmas Day service, of which it is narrated "such a concourse had never been seen."[3]

One of the Queen's most zealous converts, and also

[1] Clarendon, *History of the Rebellion*, Book II, Section 109.

[2] E. Godfrey, *Social Life under the Stuarts*, p. 189.

[3] See S. R. Gardiner, *History of England from the Accession of James I to the Outbreak of the Civil War*, chap. lxxxiii. (under date, December 25, 1637).

a very influential one, was Olivia, the wife of Endymion Porter, the daughter of Lord Boteler, and niece of the Duke of Buckingham. The Queen could never induce Porter to change his faith, but Olivia followed the fashion, embraced the Roman Catholic religion, "and became a valuable acquisition to her Majesty's party."[1] His wife's zeal and activity in the new faith caused Porter to be continually falling under suspicion. Her change of religion did not meet with his approval, and he more than once writes to her to be cautious, using such expressions as "You must be ruled by me."

Olivia's conduct as regards her father, old Lord Boteler, may be cited as an example of the active zeal of the converts. Olivia's sister, Lady Newport, a staunch Protestant, had heard of the Popish plot to convert Lord Boteler, and hurried to him; but before she could reach him, Olivia had put her father in a coach and sped with him to Woodhall, her country residence, for fear that her sister should undo her work.

Olivia's attentions were next directed to the converting of the Marchioness of Hamilton, the daughter of Lord Denbigh. The story may be continued in Con's own words, he being at that time Papal Envoy in England: "We have here, laid up with a hectic fever, the Marchioness of Hamilton, who being brought up in Puritanism, has shown great violence against the Catholic religion, until some months ago she began to walk with much moderation. . . . I have several times had speech with her through her cousin, Mrs. Porter, who informs herself daily of what should be said to her . . . but her father, who is a Puritan Ass, being afraid, makes the pseudo-Bishop of Carlisle come

[1] Dorothea Townshend, *Life and Letters of Endymion Porter*, p. 164.

to her. . . ."[1] The conversion of the Marchioness was never publicly announced.

One of the greatest victories obtained by the Romanists was that of Lady Newport herself, who, as has been previously mentioned, was a staunch Puritan. She was rash enough to enter into controversy with Romanists, who were her superiors in intellect and knowledge, and was naturally worsted by them. She had, however, the courage of her convictions, and one evening, after the play, she got into a coach with Mrs. Porter and the Duchess of Buckingham, another ardent Roman Catholic, drove straight to the house of a priest and was received into the Church of Rome.[2]

Three of Lady Falkland's daughters became Benedictine Nuns at the convent of Cambray. One of them, Anne, who had been maid of honour to the Queen in England, led a colony of nuns in 1652 from Cambray to Paris, where she was well received by her late mistress.[3]

Before leaving this part of the subject, it may be mentioned that Samuel Pepys, the author of the famous diary, though a true Protestant, was often suspected of being a convert to the Church of Rome. There is, however, a considerable reason for believing that Mrs. Pepys was a Catholic at heart.[4]

In the early days of the Stuart period it was the fashion for girls to be married at a tender age. One of the chief reasons for this deplorable fashion was the desire of parents or guardians, in the case of heiresses, to secure an advantageous match. All orphans were wards of the King, and were disposed of by him on

[1] Add. MSS. 15390, 1637, from Sig. Georgeo Coneo, October 23rd. He was, in reality, George Con, a Scotchman.

[2] D. Townshend, *Life and Letters of Endymion Porter*, p. 166.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Pepys' Diary*, November 29–December 6, 1668.

the most lucrative terms that he could obtain.[1] Boys also were married at a very early age, before their education was completed, and husbands and wives were often parted from each other after the marriage ceremony to resume their studies.

Lady Mary Villiers found herself a widow at the age of nine, and before she was twenty Mrs. Ralph Verney had mourned the loss of three children. Elizabeth Tanfield, an heiress, who passed an unhappy childhood under the strict care of her mother, a strictness which amounted to cruelty, was married at the age of fifteen to the first Lord Falkland.[2]

Though these early marriages in obedience to the will of parents were very frequent, it must not be concluded that girls were invariably submissive. We find, on the part of children, instances of determination which tend to show a growing resistance to the hitherto supreme power of parents. One of the most striking examples of this is furnished by the case of Mary Boyle, the youngest and perhaps the favourite daughter of Lord Cork. At the age of twelve she was brought to her father's house to make her début, and was provided with a rare assortment of fine clothes and jewels. Sir James Hamilton was her first suitor, but he did not meet with her approval, an entry in Lord Cork's diary noting the fact that "Mr. James Hamilton came to Stalbridge, August 12th, 1639, and brought me letters from his father, and being refused by my unruly daughter Mary, departed Sept. 2 to ye Bath."[3]

Lord Cork then took a house in the Savoy, and Mary went the fashionable round of plays and routs

[1] E. Godfrey, *Home Life under the Stuarts*, ch. viii.

[2] Author of *The Life of Sir Kenelm Digby; Falklands*, p. 2; *The Lady Falkland*, pp. 21, 22.

[3] C Fell Smith, *Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick*, p. 63.

in Hyde Park and Spring Gardens. But all to no purpose. She refused the various suitors presented to her. Her father then tried the effect of harshness, and stopped her amusements and her pin-money; but this met with no better result, and he found himself compelled, somewhat ignominiously, to give way to her obstinacy and restore her allowance.

The climax was reached when Mary fell in love with Charles Rich, a grandson of the Earl of Warwick. This suitor was most unacceptable to Lord Cork, as he was a younger son, and his grandfather held opposite political views to those held by Mary's family. In spite, however, of much opposition, and by dint of great patience and determination, Mary was married to the man of her choice. Her constancy was rewarded by worldly prosperity, Charles Rich succeeding to the Earldom of Warwick.[1]

The marriage of Sir William Temple and Dorothy Osborne, "one of the most attractive figures that seventeenth century letters reveal,"[2] was accomplished after years of patience and endurance. Sir Peter Osborne and his sons, all staunch Royalists, would naturally look askance at Sir William Temple, a Parliament man, and it was only after the death of her father that Dorothy became the wife of the man she loved. During all the years of tedious waiting ere she could attain her desire, this charming girl never failed in filial respect and devotion. Though her beauty was marred by small-pox, contracted on the eve of her marriage, this made not the slightest difference to her devoted lover, and their lives were supremely happy.[3]

[1] C. Fell Smith, *Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick*, p. 148.
[2] E. Godfrey, *Home Life under the Stuarts*, p. 131.
[3] E. A. Parry, *Letters of Dorothy Osborne*, p. 18 intro. *et. seq*

It is a curious coincidence that Lucy Apsley, who married Colonel Hutchinson against the wishes of her parents, should also have been struck down with small-pox on the very eve of her marriage. In this case too the husband's affection was proof against the damage done to the girl's beauty by the illness. There will be frequent occasion to refer to Mrs. Hutchinson, one of the leading Puritans of her day. As a child she was a prodigy, her precociousness scarcely to be believed. "By the time I was four years old," she says of herself, "I could read English perfectly, and having a great memory, I was carried to sermons: and while I was very young I could remember and repeat them exactly, and being caressed, the love of praise tickled me and made me attend more heedfully."[1]

In the same memoirs, Mrs. Hutchinson gives an account of her education. At a very tender age she was taught to speak English and French together. When she was seven years old she had as many as eight tutors, who were teaching her music, dancing, and needlework, among other accomplishments, but these she had no taste for, and she took every opportunity of stealing away to her beloved books. Her father's chaplain, whom she describes as a "pitiful, dull fellow," taught her Latin, and she soon outstripped her brothers in learning.[2]

Elizabeth Tanfield, who has already been mentioned, learnt Spanish, Italian, French, and Latin while a child, and without the aid of a tutor; and with a very little teaching conquered Hebrew.[3]

In striking contrast to the up-bringing of these two

[1] Mrs. Hutchinson, *Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson*, edited by C. H. Firth (1885), vol. i., p. 24.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 25.

[3] *Falklands*, p. 4.

brilliant girls, Anne Harrison, who later became Lady Fanshawe, recounts her education, "which was with all the advantage which the time afforded, both for working all sorts of fine work with my needle, and learning French, singing, lute, the virginalls, and dancing . . . for I loved riding in the first place, running, and all active pastimes: in short, I was what graver people called a hoyting girl."[1]

Anne Murray's father had been tutor to the two princes, Henry and Charles, and on his death King Charles appointed his widow governess to Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Gloucester. Anne says that her mother "paid masters for teaching my sister and mee to write, speake French, play on the lute and virginals, and dance, and kept a gentlewoman to teach us all kinds of needleworke . . . we were instructed never to neglect to begin and end the day with prayer, and orderly every morning to read the Bible. . . ."[2]

Elizabeth Godfrey rightly observes that this was an exceptionally Royalist family, and the above quotation dispels the popular idea that the Puritans had a monopoly of religion.[3]

The education of girls was generally carried on at home, and schools for girls were scarce; but there was one at Hackney, kept by a Mrs. Salmon, which has been made famous by having numbered among its pupils Katharine Phillips. "the matchless Orinda."

Here she learnt French and Italian, and learnt to write verses, a study which was in the main confined to boys.[4] She was the authoress of *Horace*, which

[1] *Lady Fanshawe's Memoirs* (1830), p. 55.
[2] J. G. Nichols, *Autobiography of Anne, Lady Halkett*, p. 2.
[3] E. Godfrey, *Home Life under the Stuarts*, p. 106.
[4] Ballard, *Memoirs of British Ladies* (1775 ed.), p. 201.

Evelyn twice saw acted. "I saw the tragedy of *Horace* (written by the virtuous Mrs. Phillips) acted before their Majesties."[1]

Mrs. Phillips and Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle, for whom Charles Lamb had so fanciful a devotion, were among the many who wasted their time and their talent in the composition of anagrams and acrostics, and other worthless forms of literature.[2] They were enthusiastic patronesses of art, the Duchess of Newcastle's interest in that direction being evidenced by the following extract from *Evelyn's Diary:* "To London to wait on the Duchess of Newcastle (who was a mighty pretender to Learning, poetrie, and philosophie, and had in both published divers bookes)."[3] She was the authoress of a book which Dorothy Osborne evinced the greatest anxiety to read: "And first let me ask you if you have seen a book newly come out made by my Lady Newcastle? For God's sake if you meet with it, send it to me; they say 'tis ten times more extravagant than her dress." After Dorothy had read this book, entitled *Poems and Fancies*, she wrote: "You need not send me my Lady Newcastle's book at all, for I have seen it, and am persuaded there are many soberer people in Bedlam."[4]

The Duchess of Newcastle is remembered more for the strange garb which she adopted than for her literary accomplishments. When Evelyn went in 1667 to make court to the Duke and Duchess, he "was much pleased with the extraordinary fanciful habit, garb, and discourse of the Duchess."[5] In the

[1] *Evelyn's Diary*, February 4, 1668.
[2] E. Godfrey, *Social Life under the Stuarts*, p. 131.
[3] *Evelyn's Diary*, May 30, 1667.
[4] E. A. Parry, *Letters from Dorothy Osborne*, pp. 100, 113.
[5] *Evelyn's Diary*, April 18, 1667.

course of a comical jest, for which Miss Hamilton was responsible, when it was announced to the revellers at the Court of Charles II that a lady was waiting to be admitted who "must have at least sixty ells of gauze and silver tissue about her, not to mention a sort of pyramid upon her head, adorned with a hundred thousand baubles," the King was ready to bet that it was the Duchess of Newcastle.[1]

The most picturesque, and outside the Rebellion and Revolution the most interesting, part of the Stuart period is the Restoration, with its brilliant Court, the centre of witty men and beautiful women, made immortal by Lely. It is not strange that the austerity and mirthlessness of Cromwell's rule caused a reaction which found full vent in the joy of living, and that from gloom and piety the nation turned to laughter and love. There was but one sin in the dazzling Court of Charles II, the absence of a sense of humour and the want of wit. Act and speech needed no licence provided a man did not encroach on the rights of another more powerful than himself. Before turning to the gay and frivolous, yet charming and graceful picture of this Court, it will be well to take events in their proper chronological order, and give some account of the mode of life of the Puritans. The two pictures which form so vivid a contrast will thus be laid side by side.

The Puritan's austere view of life showed itself even in the nursery, where the rod generally found great favour, the little ones requiring "to have the devil well whipped out of them." Milton was extremely severe with his own little girls, and his wife complained of the chastisement which he inflicted on his nephews.[2]

[1] *Memoirs of Count Grammont*, pub. Vizetelly, 1889, vol. i., chap. vii., p. 172.

[2] E. Godfrey, *Home Life under the Stuarts*, p. 14.

Though Milton's and Cromwell's daughters were well educated, many parents deprecated too much learning for their girls. Ralph Verney enjoined Dr. Denton not to allow his goddaughter to learn Latin or shorthand, declaring that the "easinesse of the other (shorthand) may be a prejudice to her; for the pride of taking sermon noates hath made multitudes of woemen most unfortunate."[1]

It is not suggested that all Puritan households were equally strict in their treatment of children, or were enemies of harmless amusements, for the memoirs of Lucy Hutchinson would be sufficient to discredit such a belief. Cromwell's house also was a happy and refined home for his family. But neither in these houses nor in any other of the same creed do we get the picture of irresponsible mirth and gaiety seen in the many happy gatherings of Lord Cork's family.[2] There the children were loaded with Christmas presents, whereas the festival of Christmas Day was strictly forbidden by the Puritans. The rhyme beginning "Little Jack Horner, who sat in the corner," was a satire on their self-righteousness, and their horror of plum-pudding.[3]

In 1653 we find Evelyn deploring the fact that there were no churches or public assemblies, so he was "faine to pass the devotions of that blessed day" (Christmas Day) with his family at home.[4] And in the following year he humorously records the fact that, owing to Cromwell having shut up Spring Garden, he was treated by Lady Gerrard at Mulberry Garden, "now the only place of refreshment about the town

[1] *Verney Memoirs*, vol. i., p. 500.
[2] *Lismore Papers*, Camden Society.
[3] E. Godfrey, *Home Life under the Stuarts*, p. 20.
[4] *Evelyn's Diary*, December 25, 1653.

for persons of the best quality to be exceedingly cheated at."[1]

Though the Puritans in England were not as fanatical as their brethren in New England, who put a Boston sea captain in the stocks for kissing his wife on their own doorstep after an absence of three years, yet it was unlikely they would countenance such a place as Spring Garden, which had been the scene of many a rout and festival.

Mrs. Hutchinson's language is so forcible and abusive when dealing with what she does not approve of, that it is somewhat difficult to imagine her the centre of a happy home; but in her defence it must be remembered that the Puritan of her day delighted in strong expressions and abusive epithets, and further that she was fully convinced that her first duty was to preach to others as vigorously as possible. She spares no one, and is particularly bitter against those of her own side. In one place she describes Cromwell as "a peasant in his nature, yet gentle and virtuous, but became not greatness." Later, when he had risen in power and was being courted by one and all, she alludes to him as "this beast." She calls his daughters, with the exception of Fleetwood, "insolent fools." For James I she had the greatest abhorrence, declaring that in his time "every great house in the country became a sty of uncleannesse."[2]

No discussion on Puritanism can afford to omit mention of Bishop Earle's description of a female Puritan hypocrite, a masterpiece of witty raillery. A quotation of part of it will speak for itself: "She is one that hath taken a toy at the new fashion of religion, and is enamoured at the new fangle. She is

[1] *Evelyn's Diary*, May 10, 1654.
[2] *Memoir of Colonel Hutchinson, passim.*

a Nonconformist in a close stomacher and ruff of Geneva print. . . . Her devotion at Church is much in the turning up of her eyes; and turning down the leaf of her book when she hears named chapter and verse. . . . She doubts the Virgin Mary's salvation, and does not saint her, but knows her own place in Heaven as perfectly as the pew she has a key to. She is so taken up with faith she has no room for charity, and understands no good works but what are wrought on the sampler. She rails at other women by the names of Jezebel and Delilah; and calls her own daughters Rebecca and Abigail and, not Ann, but Hannah. She suffers them not to learn the Virginals because of their affinity with organs. . . . It is a question whether she is more troubled with the Devil or the Devil with her. . . . Nothing angers her so much as that women cannot preach, but what she cannot do in church she does at the table, where she prattles more than any against sense and Anti-christ, till a capon's wing silence her. . . . She is one that thinks she performs all her duties to God in hearing and shows the fruit of it in talking. . . . She is an everlasting argument, but I am weary of her."[1]

What a marvellous change was wrought by the restoration in the morals, life, and pursuits of the English people! In Burnet's words: "A spirit of extravagant joy spread over the nation, that brought on with it the throwing off the very professions of virtue and piety."

The King was received at Dover by twenty thousand of his subjects, who acclaimed his arrival with tears of joy.[2]

[1] Arber, *English Reprints*, p. 63.
[2] Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, chap. v.

Pepys, who honoured the King's coronation by putting on a velvet coat for the first time which had been made six months before, finds it "impossible to relate the glory of this day, expressed in the clothes of them that rid . . . embroidery and diamonds were ordinary among them. So glorious was the show with gold and silver that we were not able to look at it."[1]

The splendour of the English King and his entourage was admired even by one who was accustomed to the bravery of the French Court. Charles was the centre and figurehead of the gay throng; "his wit was pleasant; his disposition easy and affable; his soul, susceptible of opposite impressions, was compassionate to the unhappy, inflexible to the wicked, and tender even to excess."[2] His volatile character was the keynote of his Court, and his unrepressed inclinations set the fashion to those who surrounded and imitated him.

Though the King's wit unfortunately lacked the applause of Pepys, who accuses him of telling his stories "meanly," and of indulging in silly discourse,[3] there can yet be no doubt that he thoroughly deserved the reputation which is now universally accorded him. Peter Cunningham's *Story of Nell Gwyn*, a collection of his witty sayings, is a tribute to him in this respect,[4] and even Bishop Wilberforce, while bringing down a sledge-hammer of disapproval and censure on his character, acknowledges his personal charm. "The personal character of the King helped on the general corruption. Gay, popular, and witty, with a temper

[1] *Pepys' Diary*, April 22, 1661.

[2] *Memoirs of Count Grammont*, pub. Vizetelly, 1889, vol. i., chap. vi., p. 123.

[3] *Pepys' Diary*, Jan. 2, 1667–8, and Dec. 2, 1668.

[4] *Samuel Pepys and the World he lived in*, by H. B. Wheatley, p. 166.

nothing could cross, and an affability nothing could repress, he was thoroughly sensual, selfish, and depraved—vice in him was made so attractive by the wit and gaiety with which it was tricked out, that its utmost grossness seemed for the time rather to win than to repulse beholders."[1]

It is just because the King's "personal character helped on the general corruption" that an apology for the length of the foregoing remarks seems scarcely necessary.

Even before the Restoration there were signs that a rigid rule of life was beginning to pall on the people of the country. In his visit to Mulberry Garden with Lady Gerrard, which has already been mentioned, Evelyn remarked with consternation that the women had started the fashion of painting themselves, "a most ignominious thing," which had previously been confined to those of a certain class.[2]

For a short time, during the early days of the Restoration, the Court was graced by the presence of a noble and virtuous woman, the Princess Royal, the mother of the man who in later days became William III. Widowed in 1650, she came to this country ten years later, and died after a stay of only three months. She was ever faithful to the memory of her husband, and in the picture-gallery of her house near the Hague she had one picture dedicated to his memory with these words: *Incomparabili marito, inconsolabilis vidua.* Her death could not have been greatly mourned in a Court which lived for gaiety.

The King did not reign long as a bachelor, but his marriage did not for one moment inspire any hopes of

[1] Evelyn, *Life of Mrs. Godolphin*, Introduction.
[2] *Evelyn's Diary*, May 11, 1654.

his reform. Clarendon's choice of a wife for him was an unhappy one, and Catherine of Braganza, the Infanta of Portugal, had neither sufficient wit nor beauty to pin down, even for a time, her husband's wayward affections. Though not greatly disposed in her favour, even Grammont admits that she was a woman of sense.[1] She had an amiable disposition, but was wanting in personal charm, and from the very outset failed to win the King's interest or attention. Her chief fault in her husband's eyes would be that she "gave but little additional brilliancy to the Court, either in her person or in her retinue . . . six frights who called themselves maids of honour, and a duenna, another monster, who took the title of governess to those extraordinary beauties."[2]

The new Queen was of small stature, but well-shaped, "with languishing and excellent eyes, her teeth wronging her mouth by sticking a little too far out; for the rest lovely enough."[3] According to Sir John Reresby, "she was not handsome (though her face was indifferent), and her education so different from his (the King's), being most of the time brought up in a monastery, that she had nothing visible about her capable to make the King forget his inclination to the Countess of Castlemaine."

Viscount Cornbury, on the other hand, gives a most flattering account of the Queen's reception by Charles, but little faith can probably be placed in his words, as he was Lord Clarendon's eldest son. There was at the time a widespread suspicion that Clarendon's choice had fallen on the Infanta of Portugal, because she was suffering from a complaint which

[1] *Memoirs of Count Grammont*, pub. Vizetelly, 1889, vol. i., chap. vii., p. 158.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 134. [3] *Evelyn's Diary*, May 30, 1662.

made her unlikely to have any issue. In the event of Charles dying without issue the crown would pass to the Duke of York, who, if not actually married, was at any rate contracted to Anne Hyde, Clarendon's daughter.[1]

It must not be conjectured that virtue was unknown at the English Court. Elizabeth Hamilton and Frances Jennings, and a few years later the Duchess of Grafton,[2] were celebrated alike for their beauty and purity. It is, moreover, gratifying to know that such a judge of morals and human nature as St. Evremonde drew a comparison, strongly in favour of the former, between the ladies of the English Court and the Courts of Holland and France, advising his friend Grammont to go warily, since "here it is a miracle if a young lady yields to any proposal but that of matrimony; and I do not believe you yet so destitute of grace as to think of that."[3]

Perhaps the most notorious of all the beautiful women at the Court of Charles II was Lady Castlemaine, the daughter of William Villiers, second Viscount Grandison. "She was a woman of great beauty, but most enormously vicious and ravenous; foolish, but imperious; very uneasy to the King, and always carrying on intrigues with other men, while yet she pretended she was jealous of him." So Burnet wrote of her, and all the chronicles of the period are unanimous concerning her beauty and profligacy.

Pepys, who did not know her personally, "gluts himself with looking at her," and finds what consolation he can in admiring her garments—"And in the

[1] *Memoirs of Sir John Reresby*, 1734, p. 6.

[2] *Evelyn's Diary*, Sep. 18, 1683.

[3] *Memoirs of Count Grammont*, pub. Vizetelly, 1889, vol. i., chap vi., p. 144.

BARBARA VILLIERS, COUNTESS OF CASTLEMAINE

FROM A PAINTING BY LELY AT DITCHLEY PARK

Privy garden saw the finest smocks and linen petticoats of my Lady Castlemaine's laced with rich lace at the bottom, that I ever saw; and did me good to look at them."[1]

She drew £10,000 a year out of the county excise of beer and ale, and £5000 a year out of the Post Office,[2] and one year at Christmas the King gave her all his rich presents. He was continually paying her debts, and among his munificent gifts to her was Berkshire House, renamed Cleveland House, which he bought from the Howards.

In spite of, or perhaps because of, these Royal favours (the natural impulse of such a woman being to take advantage of power and kindness), she bestowed her favours upon countless men, including the fashionable courtier Jermyn and the low-born rope-dancer Jacob Hall,[3] and so merited Jesse's criticism that—"If she were as beautiful as Helen, she had as many lovers as Messalina." The Jermyn referred to was a stepbrother of Henry Jermyn, afterwards Earl of St. Albans, who was reputed to have made a clandestine marriage with Henrietta Maria.[4] Grammont was in all probability jealous of Jermyn's success at Court, for he declares that "all his wit consisted in expressions learnt by rote which he occasionally employed either in raillery or in love."[5]

Lady Castlemaine's influence over the King was not restricted to private affairs. She was at all times in bitter hostility to Clarendon, who never failed (and

[1] *Pepy's Diary*, May 21, 1662.

[2] *Andrew Marvell's Works*, vol. ii., p. 75.

[3] *Memoirs of Count Grammont*, pub. Vizetelly, 1889, vol. i., chap. vi., p. 150.

[4] *Memoirs of Sir John Reresby*, 1734, p. 3. S. R. Gardiner considers that the statement "does not not rest on sufficient evidence." See article "Henrietta Maria" in *Dict. National Biography*.

[5] *Memoirs of Count Grammont*, pub. Vizetelly, 1889, vol. i., chap. vi., p. 132.

be this said to his credit) to oppose the King's lavish gifts to her.

Another woman whose attractions obtained for her ascendancy over Charles, and thereby considerable influence over the affairs of State, was Louise de Quérouaille, sent over from France by Louis for the express purpose of ingratiating herself with the King and acting as a spy. In 1680 (being at that time Duchess of Portsmouth) she was approached by the Whigs and induced to give her support to the Bill which they had brought forward to exclude the King's brother, James Duke of York, from the throne.

Anne Hyde is entitled to a place in these pages, not only because she was the mother of two of England's queens, but also because of the strange and perplexing history of her marriage with the Duke of York.

At one time maid of honour to Princess Royal, she followed her mistress's example in her admiration of Jermyn. Her marriage with the Duke of York, which will presently be related, was undoubtedly one of the causes of the unpopularity of Lord Clarendon, whose eldest daughter she was. She had a "majestic air, a pretty good shape, not much beauty, a great deal of wit, and so just a discernment of merit, that whoever of either sex were possessed of it, were sure to be distinguished by her; an air of grandeur in all her actions made her be considered as if born to support the rank which placed her so near the throne."[1] She was contracted to the Duke of York at Breda in November, 1659, and married to him secretly in September, 1660, at Worcester House.

Their marriage "was deficient in none of those

[1] *Memoirs of Count Grammont*, pub. Vizetelly, 1889, vol. i., chap. vi., p. 135.

circumstances which render contracts of this nature valid in the eye of heaven: the mutual inclination, the formal ceremony, witnesses, and every essential point of matrimony, had been observed."[1] Yet Lord Falmouth and others formed an infamous conspiracy to induce the Duke to deny his marriage. He instructed Arran, Jermyn, Talbot, and Killigrew—"all men of honour, but who infinitely preferred the Duke of York's interests to Miss Hyde's reputation," says the raconteur with subtle irony—in the part they were to act, and led them to the Duke's cabinet, where they one and all accused Anne Hyde of immoral conduct. They left the Duke, firmly convinced in their minds that their plot, which had been hatched out of hatred to Lord Clarendon, had succeeded. The Duke, however, was not deceived by their tales, and though he did not dismiss these "men of honour," he acted honourably by Miss Hyde and publicly proclaimed her his bride."[2]

A few years later, however, she was guilty of an intrigue, the evidence of which is thus summed up: "There cannot, I think, be any doubt of the intrigue of the Duchess of York with Harry Sidney, afterwards Earl of Romney, brother of Algernon Sidney and Waller's 'Sacharissa.' See on what testimony it rests. Hamilton more than hints at it;[3] Burnet is very pointed about it in his *History;* Reresby just mentions, and Pepys[4] refers to it in three distinct entries and on three different authorities."[5]

Miss Stewart's beauty is worth recording, inasmuch

[1] *Memoirs of Count Grammont*, pub. Vizetelly, 1889, vol. ii., chap. viii., p. 1.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[3] *Ibid.*, chap. x., p. 61.

[4] *Pepys' Diary*, Nov. 17, 1665; Jan. 9, 1665-6; Oct. 15, 1666.

[5] Peter Cunningham, *The Story of Nell Gwyn*, p. 197, note.

as her head was engraved by Roettier as the Britannia on the new coinage; and her profile on a medal, says Walpole, "displays the most perfect face ever seen." She was the lady whose marriage with the Duke of Richmond brought Lord Clarendon into disgrace with the King.

Pepys raved about her beauty, "with her hat cocked, and a red plume, with her sweet eye, little Roman nose, and excellent taille."[1] And again he rhapsodizes, "methought the beautifullest creature that ever I saw in my life, more than ever I thought her so . . . and I begin to think do exceed my Lady Castlemayne, at least now."[2] Grammont, who always looked for something more than beauty, says of her: "It was impossible for a woman to have less wit and more beauty."

Last of the Court beauties to be mentioned, but by no means the least interesting, are Elizabeth Hamilton and Frances Jennings, two whom the breath of scandal could not touch.

"La Belle Hamilton," the sister of Anthony Hamilton, the author of *Count Grammont's Memoirs*, which have been so frequently mentioned in these pages, ultimately married the hero of the memoirs. It is well-nigh impossible to imagine a more beautiful word-portrait than that painted by the man who became her husband:[3] "Miss Hamilton was at the happy age when the charms of the fair sex begin to bloom: she had the finest shape, the loveliest neck and most beautiful arms in the world: she was majestic and graceful in all her movements; and she was the

[1] *Pepys' Diary*, July 13, 1663.

[2] *Ibid.*, November, 1666.

[3] *Memoirs of Count Grammont*, pub. Vizetelly, 1889, vol. i., ch. vii., p. 157.

ELIZABETH HAMILTON, COMTESSE DE GRAMONT

FROM A PAINTING AFTER LELY IN THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

SARAH JENNINGS, DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH

FROM THE PAINTING BY SIR GODFREY KNELLER IN THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

original after which all the ladies copied in their taste and air of dress. . . . Her complexion was possessed of a certain freshness not to be equalled by borrowed colours: her eyes were not large, but they were lively, and capable of expressing whatever she pleased; her mouth was full of graces and her contour uncommonly perfect. . . . Her mind was a proper companion for such a form: . . . her sentiments were always noble, and even lofty to the highest extent, when there was occasion. . . . Formed as we have described, she could not fail of commanding love; but so far was she from courting it, that she was scrupulously nice with respect to those whose merit might entitle them to form any pretensions to her."

She might have married Sir John Reresby but for the opposition of his Protestant friends, who objected to the smallness of her fortune. Before she honoured Grammont with her hand, she had refused, among others, Henry Jermyn, Henry Howard, afterwards Duke of Norfolk, and the Duke of Richmond.

Sir Peter Lely, who was commissioned by the Duchess of York to paint the beauties of the Court, derived more pleasure from his portrait of Miss Hamilton than from any of his studies.

It will not be out of place to give one story very typical of Grammont's wit—a wit that made him so popular at the English Court. On the occasion of a state dinner, the King called his attention to the fact that he was being served upon the knee, to which the Count replied, "I thank your Majesty for the explanation: I thought they were begging pardon for giving you so bad a dinner."

The popularity of Frances Jennings, whose younger sister Sarah became famous in history as the Duchess of Marlborough, was due to her gay and lively dispo-

sition rather than to her beauty. This "sprightly young lady"[1] frequently indulged in mad freaks. On one occasion "she dressed herself like an orange wench, and went up and down and cried oranges; 'till, falling down or by some accident, her fine shoes were discerned, and she put to a great deal of shame."[2] A few years later this example was imitated by the King and Queen and the whole Court, who disguised themselves and visited various houses where they were unknown.

The Duke of York, who paid her conspicuous attention, was in the habit of slipping love-notes into her pocket or muff. Miss Jennings's only answer was a shake of her muff, or the taking out of her pocket of her handkerchief, when the "billets fell about her like hailstones," for any who would to see and read. In later years, however, she proved herself unflinchingly loyal to the lost cause of this same man when king.

Mary and Anne, the children of James II and Anne Hyde, were brought up in the Protestant faith by the command of Charles II, who in this respect wisely acceded to the popular voice.

Queen Anne, who has met with scant favour at the hands of some historians, and has been dismissed as merely dull and inoffensive, was a conscientious sovereign. Her errors were due to the domination of the Marlboroughs. It was due to their influence that she deserted her father when he most needed help, without the excuse which prompted the actions of her sister Mary, namely, fidelity to a husband's cause.

A wonderful friendship existed between the Duchess

[1] *Evelyn's Diary*, Nov. 12, 1675.
[2] *Pepys' Diary*, Feb. 21, 1664.

of Marlborough and Princess Anne, the strongest records of their affection being the letters they wrote each other under the respective *noms de guerre* of Mrs. Freeman and Mrs. Morley. This friendship was continued in all its devotion until 1708, when "Mrs. Freeman's" influence began to wane, and she was virtually dismissed in 1710.

James II's eldest daughter was a gentle and amiable woman. Greenwich Hospital stands as a monument of her generosity and tenderness of heart. Intended for a palace, it was converted at her wish into a home for disabled seamen.

Anne was of no less generous a disposition than her elder sister. During the great war she presented the country with £100,000 from her civil list, in an endeavour to relieve the heavy burden of taxes. And in the following year, the revenue she acquired from the First Fruits and Tenths was devoted to the interests of the poorer clergy.

The following letters are a very good sample of the humour indulged in under the Stuart kings. One would almost imagine them written at the time of the second Charles. Needless to say, they are not inserted for the purpose of inducing the modern housewife to imitate such letters of recommendation; their recommendation are their wit and humour.[1]

"Sir,—You writ me lately for a footman, and I think this bearer will fit you; I know he can run well [footmen had to run messages, among other duties], for he hath run away twice from me, but he knew the way back again; yet though he hath a running head as well as running heels (and who will expect a footman to be a stayed man?) I would not

[1] W. H. Bennett, *Howell's Familiar Letters*, vol. ii., p. 173.

part with him were I not to go post to the North. There be somethings in him that answer for his waggeries; he will come when you call him, and shut the door after him; he is faithful and stout, and a lover of his master. . . . When you go a country journey, or have him run with you a-hunting, you must spirit him with liquor. . . . "J. H.

"LONDON, *May* 25, 1628."

"*To my noble Lady, the Lady Cot.*

"MADAM,—You spoke to me for a cook who had seen the world abroad, and I think the bearer hereof will fit your Ladyship's turn. He can marinate fish and gellies. . . . He will tell your Ladyship that the reverend matron, the olla podrida, hath intellectuals and senses; mutton, beef, and bacon, are to her as the will, understanding, and memory are to the soul. Cabbage, turnips, archichoks, potatoes and dates, are her five senses, and pepper the common sense. She must have marrow to keep life in her, and some birds to make her light; by all means she must go adorned with chains of sauceages. . . . So I rest, Madam, your Ladyship's most humble servitor, "J. H.

"WESTMINSTER, *June* 2, 1630."

England is indebted to a Frenchwoman for female impersonations on the stage. This fashion, started by Henrietta Maria in person, was continued under Charles II, perhaps the most enthusiastic patron that the stage has ever had. In the latter half of the seventeenth century the drama made very great progress, and was certainly the most favourite form of amusement. The Restoration brought out a number of new plays, and while these were in process of being written, the old plays were revived. There

was a lavish expenditure in the mounting of plays; in the performance of Ben Jonson's *Catiline* the King gave the actors £500 to provide the necessary costumes.[1]

From 1667 onward we find Evelyn frequently mentioning the play in his diary, though, judging from the entries, *Hamlet* was the only play of Shakespeare's that he saw acted. Shakespeare, however, must have been greatly appreciated, since Pepys, whilst not numbering himself among the playwright's admirers, saw performances of *Henry IV*, *Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night*, *Merry Wives*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Henry VIII*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Taming of a Shrew*, and *Tempest*.[2]

Women dramatists entered the arena, not however in serious competition with men. Mention has already been made of Katherine Phillips, "the matchless Orinda," whose play *Horace* Pepys saw acted on two occasions. In *The Humorous Lovers*, which did not meet with his approval, and is described by him as a "silly play," the authoress, the fantastic Duchess of Newcastle, with her "footmen in velvet coats and herself in an antique dress," makes "her respects to the players from her box."[3]

After the Restoration two companies of actors were formed, Sir William Davenant obtaining a patent for "The Duke's Servants," and Tom Killigrew one for "The King's Servants."[4] Evelyn has an entry of one of Davenant's plays, *The Siege of Rhodes*, in which he says: "In this acted the Faire and famous comedian called Roxalana (Miss Davenport), from the

[1] *Pepys' Diary*, Dec. 2, 1667.
[2] H. B. Wheatley, *Samuel Pepys and the World he lived in*, p. 218.
[3] *Pepys' Diary*, April 12, 1667.
[4] H. B. Wheatley, *ibid.*, pp. 217, 218.

part she performed; and I think it was the last, she being taken to be the Earle of Oxford's Misse."[1]

Those who occupy the pit of a theatre nowadays often provide themselves with oranges to relieve parched throats, but the curious institution of "Orange Moll" has been long dead. This was the name given to the leader of a band of young women, who stood with their backs to the stage and sold oranges to the audience.

Another modern custom, that of paying a messenger boy to obtain and keep one's seat at a popular performance, was resorted to by Pepys in a slightly different form. He went "to the Duke of York's play house at a little past twelve, to get a good place in the pit for the new play, and there setting a poor man to keep my place, I out and spent an hour at Martin's, my bookseller's, and so back again, where I find the house quite full. But I had my place."[2]

Moll Davis and Nell Gwyn, the two most famous actresses of the day, were both the King's mistresses.

The former, who belonged to Davenant's troupe, gained the King's admiration by her rendering of a ballad entitled, "My lodging is on the cold ground," when acting the part of Celania in Davenant's *Rivals*.[3] She was also a beautiful dancer, and, according to the ubiquitous Pepys, her dancing of a jig in boy's clothes far surpassed that of Nell Gwyn.[4]

The same authority constantly praises the acting of "pretty, witty Nell," but disliked her as much as she disliked herself in the acting of serious drama.[5]

It was not until she had left the stage that Nell Gwyn

[1] *Evelyn's Diary*, Jan. 9, 1662.
[2] *Pepys' Diary*, May 2, 1668.
[3] *Rosicus Anglicanus*, edit. 1708, pp. 23, 24.
[4] *Pepys' Diary*, March 7, 1666.
[5] *Ibid.*, Dec. 26, 1667.

"became a recognized mistress of the King."[1] His Majesty's death alone prevented her being created Countess of Greenwich, and his dying prayer to his brother was, "Do not let poor Nelly starve." She died in 1687, at the early age of thirty-eight.

Burnet is somewhat severe in his criticism of her, part of which runs as follows: "Gwyn, the indiscreetest and wildest creature that ever was in a Court, continued, to the end of the King's life, in great favour. . . . She acted all persons in so lively a manner, and was such a constant diversion to the King, that even a new mistress could not drive her away."

The sedate and moral Evelyn also disapproved of her greatly, and was shocked at her familiarity with the King. "I walked with the King thro' St. James's Parke to the garden, where I both saw and heard a very familiar discourse between . . . [there is no doubt what name should be inserted here] . . . and Mrs. Nellie, as they called an impudent comedian."[2]

The impudence is undeniable; yet the kindliness of her disposition is to be remembered. Nor must her strange career cause us to overlook the lives of the many women of this age who were virtuous as well as beautiful. Such a one was the Lady Elizabeth Hastings, of whom it was written by Steele, "to love her is a liberal education." There can be no fitter form of words in which to take our leave of the ladies of the Stuart period.

[1] H. B. Wheatley, *Samuel Pepys and the World he lived in*, p. 179.
[2] *Evelyn's Diary*, March 1, 1671.

THE WOMEN OF L'HÔTEL RAMBOUILLET AND OF PORT ROYAL

(SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)

THE French no longer make history, they write it. For that they possess the most delicate language in the world. In French anything can be said, and drolleries which in English or German would be simply gross, in that tongue are vivacious. The modern French language may be said to have been created in the Hôtel Rambouillet before the conversation there descended to preciosity. It was the success of this gathering—the parent of all *salons*—which, after Dr. Conrard had also grouped some men into a symposium, induced Richelieu to found the French Academy. As the origin of the Academy, the Hôtel Rambouillet would alone be sufficiently famous, but it is not too much to say that it started eddies which are still felt whenever a few chosen spirits hold intercourse together.

The French Court at this time no longer interested the most intellectual or attractive, no longer exerted paramount influence in the land. When a Court does not do this society suffers, and the national status tends to be speedily lowered. The French Court, behind its obselete formalism, was a hotbed of debauchery and a whited sepulchre of banality.[1] Yet

[1] "Happy maids of honour, if among so many lovers they had been able to catch husbands according to their ambition and the unruliness of their desire" (*Mémoires Mme. de Motteville*, in year 1647).

there never was such need in France or elsewhere to talk as then,[1] nor was there ever a period in which there was more to talk about. The French have always been supreme in the art of conversation, and naturally in this women took the lead. The new times needed new expression, and there is nothing at all remarkable in the fact that it was an Italian woman who presided over the first French *salon*. To be able to think, read, and converse in several languages insures a breadth and a grasp which those who are confined to their own tongue can never obtain. Shakespeare's "home-keeping youths have ever homely wits" is as applicable to language as to travel. It was not only that one Italian lady founded the first French *salon* and gave greater linguistic leverage to the language, but French comprehension was broadened by the Spanish literature introduced by Anne of Austria, just as the Medici women had brought with them Italian poetry. The influence of the foreigner I have dealt with in a volume to itself. Here it is only suggested as a salient characteristic.

The Marquise de Rambouillet was the daughter of Jean de Vivonne, Marquis Pisano[2]—ambassador to Philip II and to the Court of Rome—and of Julia Savelli, of whose "excellent beauty" Constan is eloquent, adding, she possessed "all the grand qualities of the wife of Brutus and the mother of the Gracchi." She yet lives in our charming memories of the daughter she had so carefully educated. From childhood Catherine had been accustomed to mix with the clever associates of her father, and at the age of twelve she married the Marquis de Rambouillet.

[1] *Mémoire pour Servir à L'Histoire de la Société Polie en France.* P. L. Roederer, Paris, 1835, p. 22.

[2] For his effective career, see *Jean de Vivonne*, by Le Vicomte Guy de Bremond D'Ars, Paris, 1884, a fascinating book too little appreciated.

It was a happy union of two clever young people with brains far more active than those at the French Court. Before long the husband resigned his post as Master of the Horse, and thenceforth they were seldom seen there.

Not only did Madame de Rambouillet bring sweetness into French society, but she literally brought light; for she entirely rebuilt her mansion, and for the first time introduced full-length windows, a novelty since so familiar as to be miscalled French windows, whereas Paris owes them to this Italian. Her blue-room has been described countless times:

> "It was a large drawing-room, furnished in blue velvet set off with gold and silver, and the large windows opened from the ceiling to the floor, freely allowing air and light to enter, and giving a view of a fine and well-kept garden."[1]

Another writer has added: "It contained eighteen blue armchairs, and as many *tabourets* as were needed to seat the company."

In this nest Madame de Rambouillet, in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, gathered all that was clever in Paris. Of her pure morals it is impossible to speak too highly; and she can be credited with having effected a revolution in the relation of the sexes.[2] To her serious precocity French literature is everlastingly indebted. Yet only one phrase of hers has been recorded: "*Les esprits doux et amateurs des belles lettres ne trouvent jamais leur compte à la compagne.*"[3] She was too much occupied in drawing out others to

[1] *La Jeunesse de Madame de Longueville*, V. Cousin, Paris, 1853, p. 139.

[2] *Précieux et Précieuses*, Ch. Linet, Paris, 1859, p. 94.

[3] *Mémoires de Dumaurier*, quoted in *Ducatiana*, part i., p. 132.

care to shine herself. In the words of Madame de Montpensier, "Goddess of Athens, she was revered, adored; behold a model of honesty, of knowledge, of goodness, of gentleness."[1] Here was a woman living beside her husband in a house from which the profane were excluded, a mother surrounded by her numerous family, smitten with the joys of her own fireside, courageous in supporting many trials, and in her brave constancy keeping all bitterness from her friends.[2] She possessed a refined and refining nature, and if difficult in the choice of her friends, she was sincere and indulgent to them. As for her appearance, "she was large and well-made. The delicacy of her complexion cannot be described. Her eyes are so admirably beautiful that they have ever defied the painter." So runs her portrait in one of Mlle. de Scudéry's voluminous *romans à clef*.[3]

As her children grew up, she heard her house ringing with merry laughter. Fêtes, picnics, comedies, and practical jokes abounded. Once her daughter Julie nearly killed Voiture by throwing an ewer of water over him; another time two bears and their keeper were introduced. This Julie was a loving companion to her mother. It was she who became the real centre of the hôtel in its second and more recognized epoch (1629–48); and to her more than to any one else is attributed that degeneration into preciosity—a thing to be quite expected—which Molière so happily satirized in *Les Précieuses Ridicules*. But bear this in mind: when the Hôtel Rambouillet opened, it was believed to be necessary to imitate foreign writers; before it closed, Corneille,

[1] Quoted by Roederer, *vide supra*, p. 47.
[2] *Précieux et Précieuses*, *vide supra*, p. 2.
[3] *Grand Cyrus*, Paris, 1650, vol. vii., p. 489.

Boileau, Balzac, Voiture, and Molière had, under its influence, established the stability of French literature on its own basis.

It was also the earliest society in France to show that brains can be regarded as the equal of birth. There Voiture was the first man of letters to be received on a social level with French peers.[1] Some *bourgeoises* of distinction had the *entrée*—for instance, Mme. Aubrey, widow of a president, and Mme. Cornuel, who once disguised herself as her husband's former mistress to give him a nightmare, and who said of the Comtesse de Kiesque that she preserved her beauty by being salted in folly.[2] That lovely lioness; the too-golden blonde Angélique Paulet, after being associated in youth with her dissolute sovereign, obtained social whitewashing by being received at the Hôtel Rambouillet.[3] It was of her that Tallemont said, when she had sung by a fountain, two nightingales were found dead. These reversals of French etiquette at the quiet instigation of the Italian lady were of great social importance. A little later, Molière—an actor and therefore a vagabond outcast —also walked to the Blue Chamber without unduly bending his back.

For Julie, Montausier had for ten years sighed: in itself an honourable courtship such as was unknown among the contemporary French aristocracy, until she made platonic gallantry the fashion. At last he devised that famous Garland of Julie, which consisted of twenty-nine flowers painted on velvet, and seventy-

[1] *La Jeunesse de Mme. de Longueville, vide supra*, p. 154, where he is called "in some diminished degree the Voltaire of the Hôtel Rambouillet."

[2] *Mme. de Sevigné;* letter dated October 7, 1676.

[3] See the graphic picture in *Histoire de la Littérature Française*, P. de Julleville, Paris, 1897, vol. iv., chap. 2.

two madrigals composed by nineteen poets. Even then she kept him at bay for three years, but finally bestowed her hand on him, and by her departure to Saintonge inflicted an irreparable wound on the Hôtel. Her courage she had twice shown in bravely nursing Vidame de Maus and Mme. de Longueville through the dreaded small-pox. Towards the end of her life, after she became a widow, Mme. de Rambouillet lost her taste for general society; her only son had been killed in the battle of Nordlingen (1645), and her later years were embittered by the factious litigation of a dissolute daughter, the Abbess of Ypres. The Hôtel closed during the Fronde.

Julie was indifferent to the ridicule aroused by preciosity. Some encouragement to the affectation was lent by Mlle. de Gournay, who wore perpetual mourning for Montaigne, and tried to advance the language, so that it could not recede, and to preserve the use of the entire tongue.[1] Her acid accuracy may be cited in one phrase: "An honest man freely forgives a folly, but a fool can hardly pardon wisdom." More remarkable was another woman, plain, but full of wit, Mdlle. de Scudéry, the prolific—if to us dry-as-dust—romancist, whose interminable books pleased because everybody found themselves a little embellished and recognised all their acquaintances. Her own "Saturdays of Sappho" in the Quartier d'Aeolia were more middle-class, but for twelve years proved the best of the many imitations of the Hôtel de Rambouillet.[2]

Mme. de Sablé is of much more importance because, later, it was she who converted Mme. de Longueville to Jansenism. Typically amiable and distinguished,

[1] *Précieux et Précieuses, vide supra*, p. 290.
[2] de Julleville, *vide supra.*

she possessed much insight and sincerity.[1] When she was young and selfish she had several love affairs, including one with Henry de Montmorency. Yet had she never been attracted to Port Royal much might have been averted; a small cause of great results. She is remembered for her friendship with Mme. de Longueville, the central feminine figure of her time, a woman to be loved across the centuries. This fascinating woman was born in the keep of Vincennes during the captivity of her father, Henry de Bourbon, Prince de Condé, owing to the fact that her beautiful mother, Charlotte-Marguerite de Montmorency, chose to share his captivity. She herself grew up lovely, radiant in strength combined with elegance and delicacy. One reason of her importance is her love for her brother, the great Condé. It is essential to women to love. Great men have had devoted mothers, wives, sisters, or daughters: Condé had Anne de Bourbon. At the age of thirteen she desired to become a Carmelite. Her family refused, and when she was told she was to go to her first ball, it was settled between her and the nuns that she should be decked in all finery, but should wear a *cilice*. When her social success became at once transcendent that article was laid aside, only to be resumed during the long penitence which closed her life.

She became forthwith the most accomplished pupil of the school of Rambouillet, whither she brought her brother,[2] who talked to Corneille and cemented a friendship with a young priest, the future orator, Bossuet. The art of *parlature* was now being established, and it was worth studying how Mme. de

[1] *Memoirs of Madame de Motteville*, vol. i., p. 13.

[2] It was said that his wife only had two happy days: when he married her, raising her to such high rank, and when he died, thus giving her her liberty.

Longueville talked. She said so well all she said that it would be difficult to utter it better, however much labour might be applied. There were more rare and vivid things said by M. de Treville,[1] but there was more delicacy and ability and good sense in the way in which Mme. de Longueville expressed herself.[2] Two others had sought her hand, but eventually she married the Duc de Longueville. This was after the ardent courtship of Mdlle. de Vigean by Condé. She was the only woman he ever loved, and when he left her to go to the war he fainted at parting; so tender are the susceptibilities of the greatest men. The situation on his return grew unendurable, for he was already married, and the devout girl would only be his wife. In the fullness of her youth and beauty she became a Carmelite, taking the veil to escape the importunities of the mightiest warrior of his time.

The marriage of Condé's sister to Longueville was the union of a fascinating girl of twenty-three to a widower of forty-seven, who would not renounce his mistress, Madame de Montbazon. Of the latter, Cardinal Retz said: "I have never known any one preserve so little respect in vice for virtue."[3] The bride was outraged. and the enmity beween these two had far-reaching effect on the history of the times, for Madame de Chevreuse was the stepdaughter of Madame de Montbazon.[4] The latter was first happily married for a brief while to the Duc de Luynes, by

[1] "Always brilliant in wit and taste" (*Mémoires of St. Simon*, vol. vi., p. 372).

[2] Extract from her *Caractère* by an anonymous Jansenite writer, given in Supplement to vol. iii. of his Longueville series by Cousin, and quoted on p. 19 of *La Jeunesse, vide supra.*

[3] *Mémoires of Cardinal Retz*, vol. i., p. 221.

[4] These two "were both opposed" to Madame de Longueville, who "in precedence followed Princes of the blood" (*Mme. de Motteville's Mémoires*).

whom she had a son, who afterwards became attached to Port Royal. Her beauty was the chief cause of her political importance, and, between two kisses, her lover the Comte de Holland—after she had married Claude Lorraine—instructed her on international policy. "She had a ravishing figure, the most charming face, with blue eyes and fine abundant hair of chestnut hue, the most lovely bosom, and in all her person a piquant blending of delicacy and vivacity, of grace and passion."[1]

To follow her through the meshes of all her plots would exceed any romance. Perpetually exiled, familiar with the Courts of London, Madrid, and Brussels, she was the friend of the Queen and the foe of the Cardinal. Banished to Touraine, she made love to the Archbishop. Once, disguised as a man, she was lying on some straw in a barn, when a girl exclaimed, "Here is the handsomest youth I ever saw," to which the Duchess laughingly replied, "Come and repose in my arms, for you make me pity you." Wherever she was, her one object was to attack Richelieu, who died when she was forty-three, an age at which she possessed regular features, firm outlines, was very handsome, and absorbed in intrigues.

To Madame de Montbazon, Madame de Longueville presented a marked contrast. The richness of her figure in no way detracted from its refinement. Moderate fullness allowed the revelation in exquisite fashion of all the beauties of the feminine form. Her eyes were of the softest blue; her abundant locks of the most lovely light hair. She possessed much dignity, yet her particular characteristic was grace. In all her demeanour were politeness, modesty, even

[1] *Madame de Chevreuse*, V. Cousin, Paris, 1856.

Neurdein

LA DUCHESSE DE LONGUEVILLE

FROM AN ENGRAVING

gentleness, with a languor and a nonchalance which were not her least charms. Her speech was as rare as her gesture, and the inflections of her voice made perfect music. All in her betokened wit, sentiment, and harmony.[1] Women are frequently the originating causes of the great convulsions of States; and wars, which ruin kingdoms and empires, proceed often from the effects of female beauty or malice.[2] The infamous De Guise supported Madame de Montbazon, and Coligny having espoused the cause of Madame de Longueville, they fought the famous duel in the Palais Royal, after which Coligny died as much from shame as from his wounds.

So far Madame de Longueville had been free from political intrigue. She was as good as she was sweet, and the queen of the hearts of Paris. Now at the age of twenty-nine she met the real love of her life, La Rochefoucauld, who was her bad angel. Because she was a woman, she was led by him she loved, and she was artfully turned against Mazarin by La Rochefoucauld, whose pretended dues were not rendered to Condé. For La Rochefoucauld she was willing to sacrifice duty, interest, reputation, and repose. It was he who threw her into the Fronde, and who proved himself so utterly unworthy of her devotion.

The Fronde—the name derived possibly from the French word "sling"—was a popular movement arising out of the deficit of the finances, the resistance of Parliament to register the royal decrees, and the popular hostility to Mazarin. Voltaire has aptly said that love made and unmade the parties. In the famous sentence by Cardinal Retz about the passion of Madame de Longueville for la Rochefoucauld: "As

[1] *La Jeunesse de Mme. de Longueville, vide supra*, p. 249.
[2] *Mémoires of Madame de Motteville*, section for 1645.

her passion compelled her only to relegate politics to the second place in her conduct, from being the heroine of a great party she became the adventuress." For his sake she made common cause with such foes as Madame de Chevreuse, and even risked encountering Madame de Montbazon. His real object was to reach the brother through the sister, and to get the powerful house of Condé on the side of the Fronde. Madame de Longueville plied her brother with every seductive attraction, but he was obdurate, and in this civil dispute, soon merged into the clash of war, they were on opposing sides, but alike in displaying audacity.

Taking her three young children with her and being herself in an advanced state of expectancy, she sought the people in the Hôtel de Ville, as did the Duchess de Bouillon. On the steps, with their infants in their arms, these two lovely women presented themselves to an enormous crowd, the men of which uttered shouts of joy, whilst the women wept.[1] Democratic peeresses are no invention of our own time. In that very building that night Madame de Longueville gave birth to a son, who was christened Charles de Paris, and had for god-parents the Duchess de Bouillon and the *prevot des marchands*. The Fronde has its special feminine elements of interest, because Mdlle. de Montpensier and Madame de Longueville both held military commands, having under their orders ladies of quality to act as *aides de camp*. The Duke d'Orléans addressed a letter to "Mesdames the countess-marshalls of the camp in the army of my daughter against Mazarin."[2]

Between the Fronde of the Parliament and that of

[1] *Mémoires de Cardinal Retz*, Amsterdam, 1731, vol. i., p. 221.
[2] *Mémoire* by Roederer, *vide supra*, p. 105.

the Princes, the principal parties changed sides with almost unparalleled alacrity, chiefly owing to the seductions of the fair sex. In the reconciliation between the Queen and the Duchess de Longueville, so embarrassed was the latter that Her Majesty could not catch her few inaudible phrases.[1] Having narrowly escaped drowning in Normandy whilst raising an insurrection against Mazarin, Madame de Longueville was now on his side, whilst her intrepid brother was ranged with the opposite party and, after the Cardinal's success, fled to Spain. The failure of the Fronde was that of a social upheaval trying to combat a political power, which is always impossible.

The Duchess was soon to be affected by an influence differing widely from that of the Hôtel Rambouillet or of the Fronde, namely, that of Port Royal.[2] Port Royal did for religion in France what the Hôtel Rambouillet effected for literature. In each case it was the work of women: in each their influence was for an amelioration, in the one social, in the other devotional.

No need to dwell on the state of the convents. They formed refuges or living sepulchres enlivened at the fancy of the inmates. Girls who lacked fortune or beauty were sacrificed daily and peopled the less rigorous orders, introducing libertinage and scandal.[3] A request may be cited "against the Abbess de Rougemont and her sister Françoise de Luce, who had up to then lived in a manner so depraved that they have made this house more like a place of resort than a monastery, having had at least ten children."[4] The

[1] *Madame de Motteville, vide supra*, vol. iii., p. 209.

[2] It is superfluous to give references to such a standard work on the subject as *Port Royal*, by Saint Beuve, 7 vols.

[3] *Grands Jours d'Auvergne*, by V. Fléchier, Paris, 1741.

[4] *Manuscripts Collections Godefroi*, in the Institute, vol. xiii.

abbesses thought chiefly of their revenue; abuses abounded. Even the reform of Port Royal was due to a glaring one.

An old Avocat-General, Marion, wished to settle his granddaughters lucratively in convents.

"Grandfather, I should like to be a *religieuse*, as you wish, but on condition I am an abbess," said Jacqueline, the elder.

"And I, I will not," cried Joan Arnauld, the younger, "for I have heard it said that abbesses have to render an account of the souls of their professed, and I have enough to do with my own."[1]

At seven Joan was invested, and at nine confirmed as abbess, her age being falsely represented as ten years more. The education of the children, in another convent, was entrusted to Madame d'Estrées, sister of La Belle Gabrielle. Jacqueline, known henceforth as Angélique, showed no religious tendencies until the sermon of a Capucin concentrated her innate devotional aspirations. Her abbey of Port Royal des Champs, near Chevreuse, was in a swampy desert, but having severely reformed it and caused it to be a beacon of religion, she at length brought her convent to Paris, initiating a new rule that the Superior should lay down authority after three years, she herself humbly complying with this self-denying ordinance. No fewer than twelve women of her family were eventually inside its walls. Among her friends could be numbered St. Francis of Sales and Sainte Chantal, who has been regarded as the typical devout mother blessed by the Church of her period. Round this reformed Port Royal grouped themselves a number of male solitaries, the greatest, of course, being Pascal. To-day Jansenism is as obsolete as Arianism, but the

[1] *La Mère Angélique*, G. Dall, Paris, 1893, p. 3.

women it affected were among the most interesting of the time.

Jacqueline Pascal, sister of Blaise Pascal, seems to have been a charming child, who had a precocious talent for writing verses. Having composed some on the pregnancy of the Queen, she was brought to Court, and there delivered herself of several *impromptu* epigrams. Her piety seized on the fact of her catching small-pox, to thank God for being disfigured. With the sanction of her brother whom she tenderly loved, she entered Port Royal. Having translated some Latin hymns into French verse, she was checked by Mother Agnes thus: "It is a talent for which God will not ask you to render an account; bury it."[1] Characteristic of the temperament of reticence which Jansenism and Huguenotism alike inspired, Jacqueline left her relatives for the convent with tranquillity and without a word of farewell. She died at the age of thirty-six, having exhausted herself by self-discipline. A letter from her to her brother, then engaged in astonishing austerities, is illustrative of her character:

> "You put brooms among superfluous articles: it is necessary for some months you should be as clean as you now are dirty, so as to show that you succeed as well in minute care of the person as in the negligence of what affects you; and after that it will be glorious for you, and edifying to others to see you in filth (Fr. *ordure*), always supposing this the most perfect, which I doubt much, because St. Bernard was not of this opinion."

It was the intention of Pascal and his sister Jacqueline, who represent the austerity of Port Royal at its

[1] *Jacqueline Pascal*, M. Dutoit, Paris, 1897.

extreme, to retrench all attachments, all superfluity, and all pleasure.[1] Pascal forms the exaggeration of Port Royal just as Port Royal is the exaggeration of the religious spirit of the seventeenth century.[2] Anyhow, it is undeniable that he was complemented by his sister.[3] As for the religious point of view, on this may be cited this phrase from her anonymous biographer: "Every woman who writes to the public on her own feelings, undertakes to deceive them; she makes a personage, and makes it tolerably ill."[4]

The mode of life just described differed widely from that of Madame de Sablé when she became associated with Port Royal, for she kept her fine cooking, her extraordinary care of her health, and her fertility in medical inventions, at which Mademoiselle sneers so brightly in the *Princess of Paphlagonia*.[5] She frequently gave recipes to La Rochefoucauld, who had heartlessly ceased relations with Madame de Longueville. That lady now nursed her husband through his declining years, and then came to Paris intent on consecrating the rest of her life to religion. She had been much influenced in youth by Mother Magdalen the Carmelite, of whom, *inter alia*, she has left this autograph remark:

> "She also exhorted me many times not to read the romances which she saw I took delight in, and I cannot describe all she said to me on the subject, showing me this reading was very prejudicial to the soul, and even unworthy of a person of my condition, and finally she induced me to give them up."[6]

[1] *Vie de Pascal*, Mme. Perier, Paris, 1896.
[2] *Jacqueline Pascal*, V. Cousin, Paris, 1845, p. 423.
[3] *Mémoires, St. Simon*, vol. ii., p. 488.
[4] *Vie edifantes des Réligieuses de Port Royal*, ii., p. 339.
[5] *La Marquise de Sablé*, V. Cousin, Paris, 1854, p. 68.
[6] *La Jeunesse de Mme. de Longueville, vide supra*, Appendix, p. 435.

Now she came back to the Order, but was attracted to Port Royal by the suggestion of Mdlle. de Vertus, younger sister of the Duchess de Montbazon, and Madame de Sablé. In the first war of the Fronde, Port Royal had become a sheltering for the starving. Subsequently, the renowned miracle of the Holy Thorn had brought the establishment into wide prominence. This miracle had been the curing of Pascal's niece, Margaret Perier, of a lachrymal fistula. Heresy now began to creep in, for Port Royal and the group around it refused to obey the Papal edicts and abjure Jansenism. It may be noticed that here it was the women who took the initiative,[1] and the clever gathering of great penmen only wrote at their instigation, inspired by their more transcendental enthusiasm. In the same way, it is notable that in the persecutions of Port Royal then commencing, the chief protectors of its hapless votaries were also women, to wit, among others, Princess Conti, the Duchess de Liancourt, Madame de Sablé, Mdlle. de Vertus, and the Duchess de Longueville, whose fiery pride beneath her customary gentleness revolted against outrages, and she actually sheltered Arnauld, the moving spirit, in the height of the persecution. First, the instruction of the young was prohibited; then the remnant of the sisters were sent back to the original Port Royal in the unhealthy swamp, and were insulted by the licentious soldiers who were billeted on them. All this before the final dispersion.

Madame de Longueville bore a spirited share in the defence of her friends. Soon a more personal trial overwhelmed her. The throne of Poland had

[1] "Men are mere bees which flutter and make a little noise," said Mother Angelica, when overwhelmed with age and infirmities (*Jacqueline Pascal*, V. Cousin, vol. ii., p. 329).

been offered to her brother Condé, who refused but recommended her son, the young Duke de Longueville, in his stead. His mother had an interview with Louis, who offered no objection. Suddenly, at the age of twenty-four, this son of such brilliant promise was killed in a skirmish, on the bank of the Rhine before the eyes of Condé, and the deputation that came to offer him a kingdom stood beside his bier. Thenceforward the years of Madame de Longueville were spent as a Carmelite in strict conformance to the austere rule. But twenty-nine years of penitence, whilst they rendered her more angelic, could not, amid complete neglect, efface her charm; whilst her elevation of character at this period formed the most touching attribute of this Vallière of the Fronde.

THE WOMEN AROUND LOUIS XIV

WHEN all the world is young, and every lass a queen, there is glamour in seeing a handsome young fellow make love. No more dignified youth ever rode than Louis XIV. It does not seem as if his mother really cared much for him, for though in public she treated him with deference, in private she was wont to rebuke him roundly.[1] Life had been a burden to Anne of Austria, widow of the weak and profligate Louis XIII, the insulted butt of Richelieu, the adored mistress of the Duke of Buckingham, and subsequently the ignoble consort of the specious Italian Mazarin. She grew tired of governing as she had grown tired of the cabals of the palace. Her conscience had a whole council, presided over by St. Francis de Sales, to protect and direct it. The forlornness which beset Austrian princesses in France pursued her. Yet in the phrases of that Pepys of her Court, her own lady-in-waiting, Madame de Motteville, her attractiveness can be discerned. "Her features were not delicate, for she had even the defect of too thick a nose and wore too much rouge. Her eyes were perfectly beautiful, her mouth small and rosy, her lips had only enough of the Austrian family to make them more beautiful than many that claimed to be perfect. The shape of her head was handsome and the forehead well made. Her arms and hands

[1] *Memoirs of Madame de Motteville*, Amsterdam, 1723, for the year 1628.

were of surpassing beauty, their whiteness without exaggeration equalled that of snow. Her bust was very fine without being perfect."[1]

For her sake the English minister had made war, a romance so great that it did not need to be immortalized by the elder Dumas to be for ever memorable. Most wisely might Madame de Motteville observe, as I have already quoted: "Women are the originating causes of the great convulsions of States, and wars which ruin kingdoms and empires proceed nearly always from the effects of their beauty or malice."[2] This is at least as good a motive as the reckless shaking of a mailed fist, or the impulse to fight in order to distract attention from an imminent bankruptcy due to foolhardy speculation.

Louis XIII had ended by half platonically pursuing Mdlle. de Hautfort, whose large blue eyes were full of fire, whose teeth were white and even, while her complexion possessed the fairness and glow which belong to a blonde beauty. The number of those who loved her was great, but their chains were often heavy to bear.[3]

In 1643 Louis XIV, at the age of five, began his long reign of seventy-two years. His first boyish fancy was for Mazarin's elder niece, Olympe, a mediocre beauty, prematurely corpulent, who preferred to become Comtesse de Soissons. When scolded for dancing with her instead of with the Princess of England, aged eleven, Louis replied that he did not like little girls. He was resisted by Mdlle. de la Motte-Argencourt, whose charm was perfect, considering that her features were not pretty. She, too, entered a convent. Thus far it had been the love of a little boy for big girls.

[1] *Memoirs of Madame de Motteville*, in the preluding portion of Memoirs. [2] *Ibid.*, for the year 1647.

[3] *Mme. de Hautefort*, V. Cousin, Paris, 1856.

With Marie Mancini, Olympe's sister, it was different. She was very thin, with a brown skin and masses of black hair, as well as unbounded vivacity. Women thought her quite ugly. But any beauty, even that of the devil, captivates a lad of nineteen, and she pursued him so hotly that it became a question of marriage. Influences and Louis' own cool brain were, however, relentless. They parted in tears, and Marie said reproachfully: "You weep, and yet you are the master."

La Grande Mademoiselle might have been Queen, although eleven years older than Louis, had her excitable temperament allowed her to consent to give up Condé. She was never forgiven by the King for ordering the cannon of the Bastille to be fired on the troops. Of a reckless and audacious disposition, she delighted to be treated as a man and to dress like one.

Louis found the one fragrant love of his life in the exquisite La Vallière. Born of a loyal and honourable family, Louise began with that sweetness of disposition which makes her repentance so much more a matter of general recollection than that of Madame de Longueville. Among the other children in the Castle of Blois, when they had got into any mischief, Gaston, the Prince Bishop of Orleans, observed he was sure Louise had not—she was too good for that.[1]

At Court she became maid of honour to Madame Henriette, who at first made no more opposition to Louis' affection for her than did the Comtesse de Soissons. Louise was tall, graceful in figure, a little thin, with no deportment. Even if she limped slightly when she walked, she danced well and rode with

[1] *Louise de la Vallière et La Jeunesse de Louis XIV.* J. Lair, Paris, 3rd edit., 1902.

grace.[1] Her charming head had only one defect—bad teeth; but she had blue eyes, a white complexion, and indescribable charm; her hair was the fairest blonde, and she possessed an inexpressibly soft voice. Grace more than beauty most aptly described her.[2] So secret was the passion of the King that Loménie de Brienne misunderstood it. It is a coincidence that he attracted his master's notice to her by proposing she should be painted as Magdalen, "for she has something of Greek statues and pleases me much."

With youthful shamefacedness Louis blushed to let the affair become known, and for a while it was a secret. When it became notorious, Louise found herself the butt of many insults, for the Court was unused to a King's mistress being recognized. Later, however, she became a personality, after she resigned her post and was established in apartments in the royal palaces. Her only happy days were those early ones when Louis was planning Versailles. Frequent miscarriages soon impaired her health; at Brion "she lived very retired, without going out, always wearing a big dressing-gown. When she received at night for play, her guests only saw her in bed."[3]

The marriage of the King with Marie Thérèse took place in 1660. At the age of twenty-six he told his wife he intended to have only four more years of gallantry. But after La Vallière was received at Court, he undoubtedly used this "little violet" to cover his flirtation with Madame de Montespan. Yet when Louise fled to the Benedictine convent he fetched her back; and again, in 1671, Colbert was sent to bring her from Chaillot, after which came the episode of

[1] *Madame de Motteville, vide supra*, vol. iv., p. 89.
[2] *Louise et La Jeunesse, vide supra*, p. 51.
[3] *Journal D'Onnesson*, Paris, vol. ii., p. 69.

LOUISE DE LA VALLIERE

FROM A MINIATURE BY PETITOT
IN SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM

LOUISE DE LA VALLIÈRE

FROM A MINIATURE BY PETITOT
IN SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM

"the three queens in the coach"—Marie Thérèse, Louise de la Vallière, Marie de Montespan. Already the ditty was sung—

> On dit que La Vallière
> S'en va sur son declin,
> Montespan prend sa place;
> Il faut que tout y passe
> Ainsi de main en main.

Bussy de Rabutin observed that all the world admired the gentleness and submission of La Vallière under the trial of the King's cooling affection, notably in an affront at Avesnes. The sudden death of Madame, with whom she had long re-established friendly relations, may have assisted her resolution to retire from the world.

She took public leave of the King, as publicly she knelt to ask pardon of the Queen, who raised her in tears. Then she took the veil at the Carmelites, insisting the first evening on cutting her hair off. "I give myself up without reserve," was her phrase,[1] before casting herself with enthusiasm into mortifications beyond those of her severe order. "You spare me, but God will supply the deficiency," she observed when the Reverend Mother Agnes de Bellefonds mitigated her penances. Her austerity never impaired her gentle sweetness. From time to time she exerted influence for good from behind her grating.[2] When her sixteen years of atonement were closed by death, Louis calmly said, "She died to me the day she gave herself to God."

Popular fallacies are the chief obstacles historians have to overcome. One of the cherished beliefs is in the brilliance of the Court of Louis XIV, whereas close inspection shows how easily the gilt comes off

[1] *Madame de Motteville*, vol. iv., p. 351.
[2] *Vide infra.*

the gingerbread. So long as Louise de la Vallière exercised her attractive sway, so long as the Grand Monarque was young, all might have been bright. But, as a matter of fact, grandeur eclipsed comfort at Versailles, and jealousy alone dissipated *ennui*. The vast state apartments were purely for theatrical display. In those huge galleries courtiers shivered from the draughts, and conversation became hushed from fear of hearing one's own voice re-echoing amid pictures, statues, and a few isolated seats. The rooms in which Royalty, courtiers, and mistresses lodged were so small and uncomfortable that a modern servant would have refused to occupy them.[1] For example, Madame de Maintenon lived, ate, and slept in one little chamber, which, besides her bed, contained her own armchair, that of the King, and one other, usually occupied by his minister seated in front of a small table. This was where Louis spent four or five hours daily, where he transacted all the business of State, whilst his second wife—then queen of France in all but name—sat at her eternal needlework, rarely speaking unless addressed.[2] Yet it was here that "all the world passed by as through a church," to quote her own phrase. At Versailles, in the course of the next reign, when Louis XV ascended the private stair which led to the room of his eldest daughter, a series of knocks on adjacent walls could summon all the others in a minute. In contrast to the lavish bathing of the earlier Middle Ages, just as may be noted in the Court of the English Restoration at Whitehall, so at Versailles the student feels that cleanliness was as remote as godliness, though the *salle de toilet* was as ostentatious as the chapel; and if sometimes gentlemen

[1] M. Lavallée, in his introduction to *Curiosités Historiques*.

[2] See the descriptions by le Duc de Saint Simon in his *Memoirs*.

Neurdein

MADAME DE SEVIGNÉ

FROM A PORTRAIT AT VERSAILLES

of France were ruined by the cost of the clothes their wives wore,[1] and if the mistresses appeared in superb costumes, dirt, moth, and discomfort, proceeding from personal negligence of what was not visible, form undoubted and ugly features of the scene.

As to the dullness of the regular clock-work existence led by Louis XIV in his later years, a dullness which reacted on a Court only occupied with intrigue and scandal: to that the correspondence of the time plainly testifies. The Princess Palatine, sister-in-law to the King, writes: "I hear and I see daily so many villainous things that they disgust me with life. You may well say that the dear (departed) queen is now happier than we are, and if some one wished to do me the service of sending me in twenty-four hours from this world to the next, I should certainly raise no objections."[2]

Hear Madame de Sevigné, that flattered correspondent of the Court, whose letters in her own lifetime were handed round for a general admiration, which the verdict of posterity has never reversed: "If I had been asked my own advice, I should have preferred to die in my nurse's arms, for that would have robbed me of many vexations, and would assuredly have easily secured Heaven for me."[3]

Madame de Maintenon, writing to Madame de la Maisonfort, says: "If I could only give you my experience. If I could but make you see the boredom

[1] Louis XIV having intimated that he desired the Court would display great luxury at the marriage of the Duke of Burgundy with Marie Adelaide, daughter of Victor Amadeus II, Duke of Savoy, December 7th, 1697, subsequently remarked he did not understand how husbands could be fools enough to ruin themselves over the clothes of their wives.

[2] *Lettres de la Princesse Palatine;* one dated March 20, 1689.

[3] Madame de Sevigné, *Lettres,* Paris, 1826; one dated March 16, 1672.

which devours the great, and the difficulty they have in filling their days. Do you not perceive that I am dying of sadness amid a good fortune which is almost incredible. I have been young and pretty; I have tasted pleasure; I have passed years in *commerce de l'esprit;* I have come into favour; and I protest, my dear child, that all these experiences leave an aching void."

It may be said that La Vallière was the last mistress who ever loved a French sovereign. Subsequently imaginary devotion or the feminine toleration of a royal passion, from which the woman derived more or less advantage, took the place of the ardent and simple affection of Louise for Louis. The last sensual passion of that great libertine was for Mdlle. de Fontanges, who even went so far as to appear in costumes made of the same material as that of her royal lover.[1] By a tragically sudden death after her confinement, a death which gave rise to suspicions of poison,[2] she closed her brief glory in the rank of Duchess and her childish delight in her chariot drawn by six horses. Her sister, the Abbess of Chelles, said: "Her heart was with God in the beginning; the world won it; but God at length took back what was His, though it was not without pain that submission was made."

It has been observed that Louis had never made love without being pricked by his conscience, and thenceforth he was a changed man—a fact at once proclaimed by the elevation of his leading mistress, Madame de Montespan, to be superintendent of the

[1] *Lettres de Bussy-Rabutin à la Rivière*, Paris, 1858; one dated January 15, 1680.

[2] "Madame de Montespan was a devil incarnate, but La Fontanges was good and simple. It is said that the latter is dead because the former put some poison into some milk. I do not know if it is true" (*Lettres de la Princesse Palatine*, Ausgewäht v. L. Geiger, 1884).

MADAME DE MONTESPAN

FROM A MINIATURE BY PETITOT IN SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM

THE MARQUISE DE MAINTENON

FROM A MINIATURE IN SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM

Queen's household. She had originally been very strictly brought up, and after having for three years been a maid of honour to the Queen, had married M. de Montespan. At first she struggled against the advances of the King. "Far from being debauched, her natural character was far removed from gallantry and addicted to virtue. She had flattered herself she would be mistress not only of her own taste, but of the passion of the King. She believed she could always inspire him with desire for what she was resolved not to accord him. She was in despair at her first accouchement, consoled herself at the second, and carried impudence as far as it could be borne in all the subsequent ones."[1] Flattery went so far at that sycophant Court that they all made much of the favourite because she presented the King with seven children.

Here was a proud and opulent beauty, a wealth of blonde hair, azure eyes full of fire, a splendid complexion, a skin of dazzling whiteness, one of those seductive and radiant forms which enlighten wherever they pass; an incisive, caustic mind, full of *verve* and high spirits; an unquenchable thirst for pleasures and riches, for luxury and power, with the allurements of the goddess audaciously usurping the place of Juno in Olympus; possessing passion and not love, pride and not dignity, splendour and not poetry: behold Madame de Montespan—such is the word picture of an historical student.[2] Now for a while she struggled with the rising fortunes of Madame de Maintenon. Already, as her influence over the King was fading, her early tendencies to devotion returned. In her zenith, "although a great eater and a glutton, she would not on

[1] *Souvenirs de Madame de Caylus*, ed. by M. de Lescure, Paris, 1881.
[2] *La Cour de Louis XIV*, Imbert de Saint-Amand, Paris, 1888, p. 90.

any consideration have failed to observe the rules of the Church on the fasts of Advent and Lent, and every day[1] she would leave the King in order to recite prayers." One day when the Duchesse d'Uzès could not resist expressing astonishment at such religious scruples, Madame de Montespan retorted, "Must I, because I commit one sin, also commit all the rest?"

Before the conversion of Louis her influence receded. Of all his favourites she had been the most despotic and became the most humiliated.[2] For ten years she lingered at Court, and daily Louis paid her a formal visit for a few moments after hearing Mass. At length she made up her mind to quit Versailles, regretted it before many days, only to find her apartments already allotted—to the Duke of Maine. Henceforth in the convent of St. Joseph, when in Paris, she held receptions, and in her drawing-room there was only one chair—her own. Gradually the influence of the world ebbed as death approached. This once refined woman brought herself through penitence to wear chemises of the coarsest stuff, and to put on a girdle and garters with iron spikes, whilst she worked for the poor and nursed the sick. How the King regarded her death may be noted from this extract of the diary of Dangeau :—

> "Saturday, May 28, 1707, at Marly. Before the King started for the chase, news came that Madame de Montespan had died yesterday at Bourbon at three in the morning. The King having chased the deer, walked in the gardens until night."[3]

[1] St. Simon.

[2] M. Pierre Clement, *Madame de Montespan et Louis XIV*, Paris, 1868.

[3] Compare this with Louis XV's attitude when watching the funeral of Madame de Pompadour, mentioned later.

Such a career as that of Madame de Montespan forms a whole commentary on her times.

Madame de Maintenon declared she herself wanted to be an enigma to posterity,[1] and no one more absolutely realized a desire, for she has been one of the most debated women of history. She has been represented both as the vilest of impostors and as the most devout of saints. A true explanation lies midway. The keynote of her character was simplicity. She possessed quiet devoutness, whilst greatness was thrust upon her. Steady, sober persistence achieved her ends, though it may be doubted whether she ever experienced greater happiness than mere contentment. Like Josephine, who enslaved the heart of a greater than Louis, Louis' last wife was born in the West Indies. An orphan, Françoise d'Aubigné, though of gentle blood, was at one time, as a child, set to mind turkeys; and at eighteen, absolutely penniless, she married Scarron. The famous poet was then forty-two years of age, but paralysed, and with his ready wit he said of himself that his arms were as much shrunk as his legs, and his fingers as much as his hands, he being in fact an epitome of human misery. When the contract was being drawn up he said he admitted his bride possessed four louis of income, two big eyes very *mutin*, a very fine bust, a pair of handsome hands, and much wit. Asked what dowry he gave her, he retorted, "Immortality," adding, "I shall not indulge in follies with her, but I shall teach her many." Instead, she reformed him, and before his death established one of the most respected *salons* in Paris. A courtier was heard to say, "If I had to choose between taking a liberty with the Queen or

[1] *Correspondance Générale de Madame de Maintenon*, Introduction, p. 1.

Madame Scarron, I should certainly not hesitate. I would rather venture with the Queen."

Poor Queen, born within a few days of her husband, daughter of Philip IV of Spain, she had little in either wit or body to commend her to such a connoisseur of women as Louis. She, however, believed in divine right, and once being asked by a nun if she had ever been in love before her marriage, she replied, "How could I love any one in Spain? There were no kings at my father's Court." She bore the King six children, of whom only the Dauphin survived infancy; and though constantly outraged by his infidelities, she not only forgave him, but knew that his mistresses were among her attendants. The prolonged repentance of La Vallière won the pity of the wife she had injured, and often at the end of her life she visited the Carmelite convent to converse with this Magdalen she now loved.[1] A caustic spectator, to show how her affection for her husband survived, relates that whenever the King renewed relations with her, she became so gay that it was invariably remarked. She had such an affection for him that she sought to read in his eyes all that could give him pleasure; provided he was friendly to her, she was happy all day.[2] Yet she was so much afraid of him that she did not venture to address him, or to run the risk of being alone with him.[3] She had the humiliation of seeing his bastards legitimatized, and received them.

As a widow, Madame Scarron became a friend of Madame de Montespan, who brought her to Court to be governess of the first three children legitimatized

[1] See the lengthy work by L'Abbé Duclos on the relations of Marie Thérèse and Louise de la Vallière, Paris, 1869.

[2] *Lettres de la Princesse Palatine, supra.*

[3] Madame de Caylus, in her *Souvenirs, supra.*

by the King. In this position she attracted his notice, and matters became so advanced that she wrote on June 14, 1669: "Madame de Montespan will absolutely have it that I am seeking to become the mistress of the King. 'But,' said I to her, 'there are then three!' 'Yes,' she answered, 'I in name, this girl actually (Mdlle. de Fontanges), and you in his affection!' I told her she paid too much heed to her resentments." Her position was, however, alike beyond attack or reproach.

Directly the Queen expired on July 30, 1683, M. de la Rochefoucauld took Madame de Maintenon by the arm and, gently pushing her into the royal chamber, said, "This is not the time to quit the King, he needs you."[1] Afterwards Louis himself said, "Popes are addressed as Your Holiness, kings as Your Majesty, you, Madame, must be called Your Solidity." It is true nothing disturbed the composure of Madame de Maintenon, and it seems that almost immediately the King was a widower he proposed to marry the widow of the cynic Scarron.

Exactly what was the fascination of this middle-aged woman for this mature expert of her sex, it is difficult to decide. She preserved some freshness of complexion, much of her beauty only ripened in late maturity, and after all Diane de Poitiers furnishes a more remarkable instance of active fascination in later life. How far she affected the policy of the great King it is almost impossible to assert. Sitting impassively working, she, of course, had the satisfaction of being "behind the scenes" of statecraft. But whether she dexterously influenced monarch and minister before they met in her presence, or whether she was content within her own province, over this question opinion

[1] Madame de Caylus in her *Souvenirs*, *supra*.

will remain divided for ever. If she puzzles us, she was as great an enigma to her contemporaries.[1]

In the year after the Queen's death Louis was united to her in a private chapel of Versailles by the Archbishop of Paris. This marriage was described by Saint Simon as "the most profound, the most public, the most durable, the most untoward humiliation, which posterity will not believe credible, but which has been reserved by fate, if not by Providence, for the greatest of sovereigns."

Posterity certainly has not approved of this widow of fifty marrying a monarch of forty-seven, but history had in store yet deeper humiliations for the French throne. Religion helped to preserve the fidelity of the sovereign to his morganatic wife. The dullness of the Court increased. It was a time when preachers delivered pompous orations and ladies wrote elegant epistles, a period of powder and patches, of lovely clothes worn by listless beauties. One gleam alone lightens the funereal tedium of a Court which, but for its greater stateliness and tremendous lavishness, in its monotonous regularity, suggests the later years of that of Queen Victoria. Only at that delicious performance of Racine's *Esther* by the bevy of girls educated at Saint-Cyr do we find freshness and healthiness. At Saint-Cyr, Madame de Maintenon had founded a school for two hundred and fifty girls of good birth. Impressed by the ability of their recitations, she begged the great French poet to compose a moral and historical play from which human love should be severely excluded. For twelve years, from religious convictions, Racine had renounced writing dramas. He now composed *Esther*, which was given at State

[1] *Madame de Maintenon et la Maison royale de Saint Cyr*, Th. Levalée, Paris, 1862, p. 34.

performances. The King entered first, and stood leaning on his stick until the invited guests had filed past him. To obtain invitations was the most coveted thing of the hour.[1] The new spiritual director of Madame de Maintenon objected to these delicious representations as exciting vanity among the young players, and so, after *Athalie* had been acted without pomp or stage costumes, the pretty fashion declined.

Nothing so much suggests the aridity of the life at Court as the absence of children, for those who were educated within its precincts were simply juvenile adults, precociously imitating the affectations of their elders. Only one genuine child trips through this artificial comedy of manners. This is Marie Adelaide, daughter of Victor Amadeus II, Duke of Savoy, who came to Versailles to marry the Duke of Burgundy, the King's eldest grandson, at the time of their premature nuptials the bride being twelve and the bridegroom fifteen and a half. Dangeau wrote to Madame de Maintenon: "She has the best grace and the most lovely figure I ever saw, dressed as though to be painted, with very bright and beautiful eyes, black and admirable pupils, a well-welded complexion as pink and white as can be desired, the most lovely blonde hair that can be seen, and profuse in quantity. She captivated her grandfather-in-law, the King. At her marriage she wore a dress of cloth of silver with embroidery of precious stones. The diamonds she wore were those of the royal diadem."[2] Having often been to Saint-Cyr as a student, she insisted on going there in a dress so heavily trimmed with silver that she could hardly carry it. For two years the young couple conversed only before vigilant duennas,

[1] *Lettres de Madame de Sevigné, supra.* Those dated February, 1689.
[2] *Lettres de la Princesse Palatine, supra.* Dated December 7, 1697.

whilst she alone really cared for the old King, and alone inspired the succession of festivities given to amuse her. When ladies criticized her she would say, "They will have to reckon with me when I am Queen." Alas! an astrologer drew her horoscope, and predicted she would die in her twenty-seventh year. It proved true, the fatal malady being scarlet fever, although there was the customary rumour of poison. Her husband also perished in the epidemic. This was in 1712, three years before the end of Louis' long reign. The death of the Duke of Burgundy, then heir apparent, was a calamity for France. He had been the pupil of Fénélon, and had acquired from him worthy notions of a King's duty towards his people.

Saint Simon has said that the demise of the Duchess caused Louis the only real pang he ever felt. 'With her were eclipsed joy, pleasures, even amusement and every sort of grace. If the Court existed after her, it was only to languish." If history be a series of obituaries, certainly it is with an unusual consciousness of the victory of the grave that one quits the Versailles of its creator. Madame de Maintenon, eighty and infirm, left the palace for Saint-Cyr when she believed Louis dying. There, some years later, at her bedside one day, she found that strange Tzar, Peter the Great. Through an interpreter he asked her disease. "A great age," was her answer.

Many centuries may elapse, but history is not likely to repeat the empty pomp which was exhibited by the proudest Louis in his spacious palace.

To many the later portion of his reign appears illumined by the presence of Madame de Sevigné. M. Walcknaer[1] has very justly remarked that she who

[1] In his *Mémoires sur Madame de Sevigné*, in six parts, Paris, 1852-75.

had the maternal sentiment so developed had never opportunity for cultivating the filial one, because she became an orphan too soon. All the passion of her heart seemed pent up to be let loose on her daughter. When that daughter—described by her mother as "the prettiest girl in France"—married M. de Grignan and went to live in Provence where he was quartered, her mother's outlook on life was solely to report what passed around her—until a tinge of artificiality mars the sincerity, as the contemporary popularity of her letters becomes so wide. She grows sentimentally serious in the country, and indulges in reverie—which Sainte-Beuve sharply observes needed to be heard.[1] From her we realize the constitution of French society, and that the keynote of it all is conversation: "No longer as of yore is there dissertation: people chatter about the news of the Court or of the siege of Paris or of the war in Guienne: Cardinal de Retz relates his voyages, M. de la Rochefoucauld moralizes, Madame de la Fayette utters romantic reflections, and Madame de Sevigné interrupts them all, to quote a phrase of her daughter's—that conventional daughter who never said anything worth listening to."[2]

But here we have the difference between English and French society. The former is dull, and has recourse to distractions because few know how to talk and the rest do not know how to listen. Conversation is the pursuit of Gallic social life. With the French it is a delicate art.[3]

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits de Femmes*, Paris, 1845, p. 13.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[3] Mademoiselle de Montpensier writing, in 1660, to Madame de Motteville, says: "We need all sorts of people to be able to discuss all sorts of things in conversation, which, in your opinion and mine, is the greatest pleasure of life, and almost the only one so far as I am concerned." (*Vide* also *Mémoires de Mdlle. de Montpensier;* notes by A. Chernel, Paris, 1891.)

WOMEN OF LOUIS XV PERIOD

THERE is as great a decline in the famous women of the Court of Louis XV as compared with those of his great-grandfather and predecessor as there is between the two monarchs. The elder was at least a royal lover, the younger a reprobate of the vilest type, who could not dispel his boredom by exercising the foulest depravity. The growing democracy of the times was shown in the selection of the women who gathered fame from their association with him. Hitherto the ladies who held a monarch's affection had been of aristocratic rank. La Pompadour came from the middle-classes, and Du Barry from the dregs. She it is who descends to posterity with the nickname of "the gate of the Revolution."

The wife of Louis was one of those dull, good women who seem by their very worthiness to provoke dissolute husbands to infidelity. Marie Leczinski was the daughter of the proscribed King Stanislaus of Poland. She had been chosen out of the ninety-nine eligible princesses on the list compiled at Versailles merely because against her name was put the comment, "nothing is known that is disadvantageous to her family," and she was regarded as likely to be a puppet in the political game. Gentle, pious, modest, her marriage began auspiciously. There was no scandal in the respectable union, but D'Argenson blames her for not making herself agreeable to her

husband, who presently cast his affections on the graceful Comtesse de Mailly, and for four years the vigilance of an inquisitive Court did not discover the intrigue. Even when the King avowed his choice, the Comtesse was too empty-headed to keep his affection.

Perceiving that he would not keep faithful to her, she appears to have thought the best course was to keep the King in the family, and deliberately threw her pretty sister Felicity in his path with the desired result. She died in childbirth, a catastrophe which reunited Louis to her elder sister. In turn she was replaced by yet another sister, who subsequently became Duchesse de Chateauroux. The latter, however, made her surrender conditional on this eldest sister being irrevocably dismissed from Court. It seems past belief, yet it is a fact that when she had gone Louis wrote to this loving Countess de Mailly letters full of his affection for her younger sister. This time he was "fixed for ever, she having as much wit as is necessary to be charming." To see him felicitating himself on his own voluptuousness is, indeed, enough to provoke sardonic laughter.

The Duchess and a troop of other ladies followed the King on his Metz campaign, making themselves as ridiculous as a few English women did in the Boer War. Falling ill, the King fulfilled the prophecy of the unprincipled Duke de Richelieu and became a saint, dismissing his mistress and imploring pardon of the Queen. Convalescent, he resumed his debaucheries. The Duchess understood him:—

> "I can well believe that as long as the King is a little weak in the head, he will be very devout; but so soon as he recovers, I wager that I shall run furiously in his head, and at length he will not

be able to resist asking what has become of me. If he recovers, he will make me public reparation for the present insult. Up to now I have conducted myself with dignity; I shall always preserve that; it is the sole means of making myself respected, of regaining general admiration, and of retaining the consideration I deserve."[1]

Did ever a coarse impropriety more hypocritically humbug even herself? On the night of the public thanksgiving for his recovery, Louis surreptitiously came to her lodgings and complied with her conditions. "Since the King has retaken her, he will not obtain one more 'Pater' on the streets of Paris," cried the women of the markets, they who played the part of a Greek chorus for the next fifty years in Paris. But a ravaging fever suddenly terminated the life of the Duchess, and the King not only never came near her, but never troubled to inquire for her. It was only the outraged Queen who pitied her, and on the night of her death refused to attend a party given by the Duchesse de Luynes. "Ah! that poor woman," she cried. "If she were to return! I think I see her." "Well, Madam," said her maid, "if she came back, it would not be Your Majesty she would first visit."

For a while Louis became domestic. Then crossed his path the famous Pompadour. This woman of gracious demeanour and pretty to look upon was a consummate actress, incapable of sincerity, her very beauty in great measure due to the artifices of the toilet table. She could dance, sing, ride, mimic. As a girl she was delicious, and her mother, admiring her,

[1] *Lettres autographes de la Duchesse de Chateauroux.* Bibliothèque de Rouen, and quoted after *Mémoires de la Duchesse de Brancas.* Notes by E. Asse, Paris, 1890.

THE MARQUISE DE POMPADOUR

FROM A PAINTING BY BOUCHER IN THE WALLACE COLLECTION

declared: "There is a tit-bit for the King," remembering that when she was nine a fortune-teller by cards predicted she should be his mistress. When she married M. d'Etioles, she promised him never to be unfaithful except with the King, with which assurance the poor fool was content. However, she became the fashion, and having thrown herself over and over again in his path when the King was hunting in the forest of Senart, she attracted his attention. At the masked ball at the Hôtel de Ville she came as Diana in powder, with her quiver on her shoulder, a silver bow in her hand. For a moment she discarded her mask and made as though she would shoot an arrow at the King. "My fair huntress," he said, "the features you reveal are mortal." Thereupon she replaced her mask and glided into the crowd, but dropped her handkerchief, which the King picked up and threw at her.

The next step she took was to penetrate the palace and demand shelter from her husband with the King, heartlessly rejecting the love of a very good and devoted man. In July, 1745, she showed eighty love letters from her sovereign, one of which bore her brevet as Marquise de Pompadour. Installed as mistress at Versailles, she was actually presented at Court on September 15, but even her audacity was troubled when face to face with the Queen. Yet Marie Leczinski received her so kindly that the Pompadour could only stammer: "I have the most ardent passion, Madam, to please you." Which was true; and knowing the Queen loved flowers, she took care to send her bouquets as often as possible;[1] whereupon the Queen said, "After all, if there had to be a

[1] *Mémoires du Duc de Luynes*, in 17 vols., Paris, 1860–5. Allusion dated March, 1746.

mistress, this one was better than most, for the King was less gloomy and a little less bored since he had been directed by Madame de Pompadour."

In a short time she was meddling in diplomacy, in finance, and with the army. The unpopular Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle was ascribed to her: "Foolish as the Peace" became the catch phrase.

The boredom of the King was the terror of La Pompadour. Her problem was to distract a man whom nothing could amuse. So she organized her famous amateur theatricals.[1] Dukes and duchesses had parts, but the star in opera, comedy, or ballad was the mistress. The King reserved to himself the right of selecting the audience, and to obtain invitations courtiers resorted to any intrigues.

> "The King, who was said to be growing tired of the favourite sultana, is more enraptured than ever. She had sung so well and acted so well in these last ballets at Versailles that His Majesty has given her public praise, and caressing her before every one, has told her she is the most charming woman in France."[2]

New works of Voltaire and Rousseau, Molière, Quinault, and Rameau were produced. The success was colossal. Yet her confidential maid, Madame du Hausset, could say to her: "I pity you heartily, madame, whilst all the world envies you." "Ah," replied La Pompadour, "my life resembles that of a Christian, for it is a continual combat."

She tried to stand well with the Church, and caused a magnificent mausoleum to be constructed for her mother's body, beside which she reserved a place for

[1] A full account is in *Histoire du Théâtre de Mme. Pompadour, dit Théâtre des petits Cabinets*, by Adolphe Julien, Paris.

[2] D'Argenson in his *Mémoires*, Paris, 1825.

herself. Gentlemen waited on her as on royalty. Petitioners swarmed, offering adulation. Lodged sumptuously, dressed richly, she was yet the victim of anonymous letters, and was terrified of being poisoned or supplanted. She neither believed in the devotion, the love, nor even the friendship of the King.[1] But she had her secret police, who even tampered with the letters confided to the post; and she hated Frederic the Great because he laughed at her, almost as much as she hated her own countrymen, because they hated her.

When middle age came on and "she became dry like wood"—in d'Argenson's phrase—she was willing to become minister instead of mistress. It was to her lack of insight that France owes the loss of her colonial empire. Montcalme had defeated the British in four battles, but she abandoned him to Wolfe at Quebec, just as Dupleix was abandoned to Clive in India. England had found a man in Chatham; France suffered under a woman in La Pompadour. Chatham said, "I shall conquer Canada in Germany," and by so saying he proved his appreciation of the situation, for La Pompadour valued an acre in the Palatinate more than a hundred thousand square miles in Canada. What she wanted was to be acknowledged by Marie Thérèse, and though a lot of nonsense has been written on the subject, it is a fact that Marie Thérèse never wrote to her in terms of affection or equality. A letter is extant to Stahemberg, in which the Empress wrote kindly of La Pompadour, but that is a very different matter. To gratify this wish, the French mistress brought on the Seven Years' War. Amid the ensuing disasters it became the French

[1] *Mme. de Pompadour et la Cour de Louis XV*, by M. E. Campardon, Paris, 1867.

fashion to exalt the national foe, Frederic—hence pro-Boerism of 1899 was no new thing—and to curse Cotillon IV, as he nicknamed La Pompadour, struggling to form a strange alliance with Marie Thérèse and Elizabeth, Empress of Russia. The disaster of her foreign policy reacts on France to this day.

She had negotiated her conversion with the Jesuits, but stipulated she should remain at Versailles,[1] and had actually demanded to become lady of the bedchamber to the Queen. That she should have succeeded forms a curious commentary on contemporary morality. Without a trace of erudition in her head, she fraternized with Voltaire, who proved an obsequious flatterer, and entertained all the philosophers whose ethics paved the moral path that led to the Revolution. The Jesuits, who had displeased her, were exiled at her suggestion. She desired to hold power to the end, and what came after her mattered nothing to her.

> "She would only appear in artificial light in the apparel of a queen of Golconda, crowned with diamonds, wearing twenty bracelets, and trailing an Indian dress embroidered with gold and silver. She seemed still the divine marquise of old time; but closer inspection revealed that she was only a pastel, charming still, but here and there faded and repainted. It was at her mouth that she commenced to lose her beauty. She had early acquired the habit of biting her lips to hide her emotions. At thirty her mouth had lost its brilliant tones. It had to be repainted after every meal, after every kiss."[2]

[1] *Clement XIV et les Jesuites*, by J. A. M. Cretineau-Joly, Paris, 1847.
[2] *Louis XV*, by Arsène Houssaye, Paris, 1890.

At forty-two, prematurely worn out, she was on her death-bed, and even then she feared the King more than God. When she received extreme unction, as the priest was leaving she said, "Wait one minute; we will go together." Long before her death Louis had been tired of her. From the window of Versailles, on a tempestuous day, he watched the departure of the hearse that carried her corpse to Paris. "The Marquise will not have fine weather for her journey," he said, as he pulled out his watch and calculated at what hour the funeral would reach its destination.

Queen Marie Leczinksi was impressed by the extreme promptitude with which the famous favourite was forgotten. "There is no question here of what no longer exists, any more than if she had never existed," she observed to President Hénault. "Of such is the world; it is not worth the trouble of loving it."

The end came—apart from the infamous Parc aux Cerfs[1]—with Jeanne, the natural daughter of Anne Béqus.[2] She was a Parisian *midinette* before the name was invented, but personally not so respectable. By the machinations of Richelieu, when her beauty became notorious, she met the King at a supper at Lebel's, which was more lively than discreet.[3] His Majesty ordered that her respectability should be proclaimed—if not believed—by a formal marriage. William du Barry, brother of a former admirer of the wench's, was the victim, and after the union he returned to Toulouse, and his wife was installed at Versailles in the rooms immediately above those of the King.[4] She was a blonde with a small Grecian

[1] A château presented to the King by La Pompadour.

[2] Her birth certificate from the register at Vancouleurs.

[3] *Mémoires d'un Voyageur qui se repose*, by M. Dutens, Paris, 1806.

[4] *Les Maîtresses de Louis XV*, by Ed. and J. de Goncourt, Paris, 1860, vol. ii., p. 155.

nose, a very small mouth, and an infantine expression allied to a nature devoted to every voluptuousness. Received at Court, she proved unobtrusive apart from her extravagance, and though drawn into political intrigues after a three hours' interview with M. de Choiseul, her existence was really confined to the alcove, whilst that of Madame de Pompadour was political.

Her success increased in royal estimation when she degraded amateur theatricals in the notorious *Truth in Wine*, wherein she showed herself in her bestial vulgarity. The historical importance of the woman is that she finally degraded the throne of France. If Madame de Pompadour is portrayed as a Watteau shepherdess, Madame du Barry is an unabashed Bacchante.[1] As the Aspasia of the French Sardanapalus,[2] any historian has to regard her and pass by on the other side. No other woman who fell by the guillotine showed such pitiable terror as she when brought to the place of execution in the tumbril. Whereas aristocrats died with a cynical smile, this bantling of the dregs displayed the cowardice of a calf in the hands of the slaughterer.

[1] *La Gazetier Cuirassé*, London, 1772.

[2] The phrase of René François Dumas, president of the Court.

WOMEN OF THE *SALONS*

THE brothers de Goncourt, in the preface to their masterpiece, declared that the eighteenth century had been neglected by historians.[1] If they were the first to remove the stigma, none of the army of subsequent spade-workers in the same soil have been able to surpass their specialization on the subject. They were also the first to see that the frivolity was only on the surface and formed the mask for deep human emotions. From the picture they drew can be summarized the existence of the Frenchwoman of the times, and with that in our minds the special influence of the women who affected the Encyclopaedists is more fully appreciable.

There was no gratification in a family on the birth of a daughter, and at first she was consigned to some remote part of the house with a nurse, who might be neglectful, and later a governess, who knew very little and taught her discreetly, foreseeing in her present pupil a future dame to whom she might be companion. Children, however, became fashionable in society, and were introduced with all the vivacity corrected out of them. They were miniature women, wearing rouge and redolent of scent, indulging in affectations and graces, with a consuming ambition to be godmothers —the great social distinction for little girls at that epoch.

[1] *La Femme au Dix-huitième Siècle*, by Edmond and Jules de Goncourt. New augmented edition, Paris, 1896, p. 1.

Soon these children—deprived of their birthright to be young—found themselves in convents. How important a position these latter occupied in the social sphere may be gathered from the estimate that about two hundred thousand women disfigured by small-pox alone were inmates.[1] They were the hotels for the sex, the resort of those who desired to economize, as well as the asylums to which were consigned the superfluous woman—who was even more in evidence in times of war than to-day. This latter point may be emphasized by the quotation: "An ugly woman is a being who has no rank in nature and no place in the world."[2]

Girls were sent to convents to make friends just as boys are to-day sent by calculating parents to Eton for the same purpose. Fontevrault was the fashionable educational seminary. Madame de Barbantine placed her daughter there to ingratiate herself with the Duchesse de Bourbon, so that she should become her lady in waiting.[3] Brides of twelve and thirteen, sent back to complete their education, were generally at the more finishing establishment known as the Convent of the Presentation.

It is necessary to point the moral and show where lay the mischief? Of course it was in the fact that the mother was separated from her child. In the tenderest years, when the susceptibilities are first awakened and when the mind is most receptive to impressions, the girl was cast on the care of strangers, and the mother, who should have hovered over her, clasping her to her bosom, was occupied by a hundred trivialities, all regarded as more important than her daughter.

[1] The statement was made by the Prince de Ligne: *Œuvres Choisies*, Brussels, 1860, 4 vols.

[2] *Les jeux de la petite Thalie*, de Moissy, Paris.

[3] *Mémoires de Mme. de Genlis*, Paris, vol. ii.

In France then as now the phrase "a marriage has been arranged" is strictly accurate. The bridegroom was accepted for the money and the position he could give the bride.[1] In fashionable unions the banns were only once published. The wedding took place very soon after the announcement of the engagement. In a few cases where display was ostentatious, the ceremony was celebrated at a midnight Mass. The honeymoon was cut as short as possible, for the bride longed to show herself in the special box at the right of the Queen's at the Opera, which on Fridays was reserved for this.[2] Then followed her presentation at Court and the exchange of formal visits, after which she became a lady in society. She soon learnt the hundred and one delighted nothings which make up the life of a woman of fashion. It might seem of to-day in certain smart sets that the following is written:

> "She throws away every serious thought in order to rise to the accepted view of life, measuring its contents by these two standards: being bored or being pleased. Thrusting away the phantoms of modesty and seemliness, renouncing all religion, all the preoccupations which her sex had had in other centuries, the duties, habits, and sorrows, the woman puts herself on the summit of the new doctrines, and she manages to advertise that mundane wisdom which sees in human existence, when freed of all severe obligations, only one right, one aim—amusement; which reveals in a wife freed from the bondage of marriage and of the habits of domesticity only, a being whose one duty is to present in society the picture of pleasure, to offer and to give it to all."[3]

[1] "I marry to go into the world and see balls, promenades, operas, and comedies" (*Mémoires et Correspondance*, Diderot, Paris, 1841, vol. i.).

[2] *Journal Historique*, Barbier, Paris, vol. iii.

[3] *La Femme au Dix-huitième Siècle*, *vide supra*, p. 39.

The *salon* of 1730 was domestic and rather dull. That of 1760 was gay, noisy, and delightfully heartless. That of 1780 was more pessimistic, more grave, and when there was laughter it was "*au bout des dents.*" The *salon* under Louis XIV was a symbol of the past, that of Louis XV of the present, that of Louis XVI of the future. So far as the big receptions were concerned, at the Palais-Royal everybody who had been presented could come to supper on the Opera nights, and on the others about twenty people specially invited—charming women and agreeable men—formed a coterie more brilliant than the gathering at the Temple where the Prince de Conti gave suppers on Mondays.

The pride of the nobility may be gathered from one remark made by the Duchess de Fleury to Madame de Laval: "Whatever respect I feel for the King, I have never felt I owe him my position. I am well aware that nobles have sometimes made sovereigns, but although you have as much wit as birth, madam, I defy you to tell me that it is the King who has made us nobles."[1] But aristocratic dignity could be so heavy that, at a ball given at the Hotel Condé, a dozen women of the town were introduced to animate the festivity and, by contrast, to throw into relief the virtue of the duchesses.[2] In a vaudeville the seven dames who supped one night with Madame de Chauvelin were represented as the seven capital sins.[3]

The *salon* which really established perfectly good company in French society was that of the wife of Marshal de Luxembourg. There existed the perfection of good style controlled and instigated by the

[1] *Correspondance littéraire*, Grimm, Paris, 1829, vol. ix.
[2] *Les Cinq Années Littéraires*, Clement, Bertin, 1755, vol. i.
[3] *Mémoires*, Count de Maurepas, Buisson, 1792.

hostess, and the tradition of "honour" was brought to its modern standard. A man or woman not received by her found every door in Paris shut. The lavish hospitality on an enormous scale of the Duchesse de Choiseul was the cause why society became enlarged, and why so many of her emulators became involved in the fruits of extravagance. The Duchess caused conversation to be drowned in a babel.[1] Of all the searches for amusement so eagerly pursued, not the least notable were the suppers to wives given by the Countess de Custine on the days when their husbands slept at Versailles to hunt with the King.

Then as now the wealth of the world of finance bought a place in the world of aristocratic exclusiveness. Then as now there was the craze for animals; Marie Leczinski rising half a dozen times in the night to look for her dog; Madame de Pompadour having images of hers engraved on stone; the Princess de Conti teaching hers to bite her husband; and Madame du Deffand causing her cats to be painted by Cochin. If yesterday "Pigs in clover" was a mania, in the eighteenth century there was as wild a one for cutting out pictures. And as for the rush of life:

> "No repose, no silence, always movement, always noise, perpetual distraction from self, such was life. The woman would not have an hour for thought, a moment of solitude. Her imagination jumps from notion to notion, from occupation to occupation; her day is all hurry, projects of a moment, a whirlwind of inconstant impetuosity which carries her to all parts of Paris on the spur of an opinion, of an advertisement, of a theory, of a course of lectures, on the wings of a caprice which ruffles her brow at it passes."[2]

[1] *Mémoires*, Count Alexandre de Tilly, Heideloff, 1830, vol. i., preface.

[2] *La Femme au Dix-huitième Siècle*, *supra*. Chapter on Dissipation of Society.

It sounds like to-day, with the perpetual search for novelty, the delight in amateur theatricals, the dances of Scaramouche, to which we supply an analogy in the cake-walk, and the sense of emptiness. "*L'ennui du cœur et non de l'esprit*," in the phrase of Mdlle. d'Ette to Madame d'Epinay,[1] summed up the feminine situation then and now. Consequently, a man who could move hearts became a demigod. Madame de Polignac and the Marquise de Nesle fought for the Duke de Richelieu in the Bois de Boulogne.[2] At the end of such an affair as most women of thirty, who had merged decency in elegance, appeared to be engaged in, there came the despairing cry, "At least tell me you have loved me," an appeal against the heartless fashion of wooing a woman secretly in order to abandon her publicly. Romances occurred, as when Miss Stafford, an English girl brought up in great seclusion and herself devout, fascinated by the novels of Crebillon, furtively went to Paris, enraptured the man of whom she was enamoured, and actually induced him to live for years in secluded happiness with her.[3] It is not too much to say that for social France of the eighteenth century *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* was as potent as *The Prince* for political history of the sixteenth. There were cries of passion, such as that of Madame de Salzan to the Count de Boufflers, "Adieu, my husband, my lover, my friend, my universe, my soul, my God."

There were also happy marriages then as now. For example, although it was customary to regard nuptials as a contract, yet Madame d'Avaray actually followed her husband to his garrison, creating a sen-

[1] *Mémoires*, Mme. d'Epinay, Paris, 1863, two vols. in one.
[2] *Mémoires*, Richelieu, Paris, vol. ii.
[3] *Correspondance*, Grimm, *vide supra*, vol. vii.

sation by so doing. On the other hand, legal separations were fashionable—quite as sincere, certainly, as the marriages of convenience in which the husband had to take a derogatory part. The following is the entire text of a letter written by the Countess de Mangiron to her husband:

"I write to you because I have nothing to do. I end because I have nothing to say to you.

"SASSENAGE, very regretful at being

"MANGIRON."[1]

So far as the lower classes were concerned, the idea of marriage seems to have presented itself under the repugnant form of a household resounding with recriminations and blows.[2] Yet from the baser ranks rose Sophie Arnould, the clever actress who was sought in society, and whose wit is the theme of fifty tales. In the country, when she met a doctor going to see a patient and carrying a gun in order to get some game on the road, "I see, Doctor," said she merrily, "you are afraid of missing him." On another occasion, when a foolish woman complained of being pestered by too many admirers, Sophie Arnould replied: "It is so easy to get rid of them. You have only to speak to them." She was not conspicuously reverent. Forced to sell her lands at the Revolution, she put over her door, "Ite, missa est"; while to the priest, on her death-bed, she observed, "I am like Magdalen; much will be forgiven me because I have loved much"—the true summary of the lives of many women despised by their more cool-blooded and less tempted sisters.

More notable still is the hapless Adrienne Lecouv-

[1] *Paris, Versailles et les Provinces*, Paris, 1823, vol. iii.

[2] *La Femme au Dix-huitième Siècle, supra*, p. 285.

reur, who is supposed to have died from poison sent in a bouquet by the Duchess de Bouillon, her less fortunate rival for the affection of Marshal Maurice de Saxe. A contemporary gives this word-picture of the great actress of the Comédie Française:

> "She was of medium height, with head and shoulders well placed, eyes full of fire, a beautiful mouth, the nose rather aquiline, very prepossessing in manner and appearance, with a dignified bearing. Though not very stout, her figure did not present any of the drawbacks of thinness; her features were well marked, and suitable to express with facility all the passions of her heart. The taste, research, and richness of her attire gave a fresh lustre to her imposing air, to her noble gait, to her accurate and always energetic gestures."

She passed her life in loving,[1] and was cut off at the age of forty, ecclesiastical burial being scandalously denied to her body. From the Chevalier de Rohan she cast herself into the arms of Voltaire, then of the gallant Lord Peterborough—who, after her death, acknowledged the singer Anastasia Robinson as his wife—and finally the gallant Maurice de Saxe. The efforts of Mme. Sarah Bernhardt have preserved to this generation a version of the story of one of the most distinguished ornaments of the stage.[2] Sentimentality is, however, lost in the pathos of the close of this histrionic career.

Actresses in society! It sounds as though it were one of this year's phrases. And that is our point: the social world of the eighteenth century in Paris resembles the social world of the twentieth century in London in all its duller, lower, more stupid aspects.

[1] *Le Roi Voltaire*, Arsène Houssaye, Paris, 1858.

[2] In *Adrienne Lecouvreur*, drama in five acts by Scribe and Legouvé.

Later we will show where the differences, those supreme delicious differences, lay. When it comes to similarities, there are so many instances that it is difficult which to select.

Fashion then as now ruled paramount. Just as the black and white flannel suit which King Edward VII wore at Sandown Park races, that became the day after the conventional undress costume, so a compliment from the Regent to two English ladies who wore their hair low on the neck in one day caused a revolution in Parisian coiffures.[1] Marie Antoinette was called the Queen of Coiffure long before she was Queen of France, and there is a dignified defence of hairdressing compiled by one of the twelve hundred who followed this profession in Paris in 1769:

> "The art of dressing a lady's hair can be attained only by a man of genius, and is consequently a liberal and free art. Moreover, the arrangement of the hair and curls is not the whole of our work. We have the treasures of Golconda in our hands, for we arrange the diamonds, the crescents, the sultanas, and aigrettes."

A display of the costumes of the century would relate the whole of its history, just as to-day we could reconstruct the history of English progress after looking in the shops in Oxford Street. Dress accommodated itself to the tastes of the women who dominated the period. Its phases can be traced in the diaphanous garments of allegorical nymphs under Louis XIV, in the enormous skirts of the Watteau epoch, followed by the fashions *à la* Pompadour, gradually tending towards the artfully artless *negligé*, which in summer left the bosom bare and brought us

[1] *Mémoires*, De Maurepas, Paris, vol. iii.

to the *Directoire* costume of the Merveilleuses, and that final outrage on decency when individuals of either sex actually ventured into the garden of the Tuileries practically undressed and were stoned by the mob.[1]

> "A fashion has no sooner supplanted another fashion than its place is taken by a new one, which in turn makes way for the next, and so on; such is the fickleness of our character. While these changes are taking place, a century has rolled away, relegating all this finery to the dominion of the past."[2]

The craze for clothes spread through every rank in Paris, and Cololendi notices the strange preference of the women for wearing second-hand clothes of a style more lavish than they could afford to have made. They would squeeze their feet into shoes much too small for them, inspiring the cry "Fashion is the veritable demon which torments this country."[3] Patches are invariably carried in a box, and seven or eight were always worn. Whilst powder became general,[4] several of the actresses—Mdlle. Clairon, for instances—did not wear it off the stage. Masks were employed not so much for concealment as to preserve the complexion from sun and rain. But they were always taken off before going into a room in which the lady with the mask was likely to meet others of rank superior to her own.[5]

Just as to-day Spiritualism, Christian science, and crystal-gazing are traps to catch the unwary and fool-

[1] There is an account of this in an early volume of *Temple Bar*.

[2] *Les Caractères*, La Bruyère, sixth ed., 1691.

[3] M. Nicolas, *Restif de la Bretonne*, Paris, 1770.

[4] *Eighteenth Century France 1700–1789*, Lacroix, London, ed. 1876, p. 462.

[5] We all wish to apear old so as to be thought wise," said a courtier to Louis XIV.

ish, even so superstition—never dormant[1]—became rampant in the eighteenth century in Paris, as though some women and some men lacked the courage necessary to embrace the prevalent philosophy. Horoscopes were cast as they are now. Mdlle. de l'Espinasse writes with horror of Friday; Madame de Pompadour steals surreptitiously to consult a woman who tells fortunes from the dregs of coffee; and there were *séances* for the purpose of raising the devil. In one of these, two noble dames, having been told they could see his Satanic Majesty only after giving up their clothes and their money to the witch, were found stark naked by a commissary of police.[2] With such aristocratic credulity rampant, was it wonderful that the convulsionists of the lower classes should go through their hysterical spasms on the tomb of St. Médard, until the authorities closed the graveyard?

It is difficult to indicate briefly how little part the Court played in the history of the nation after the advent of Madame de Maintenon, though no deeper abyss of superstition was ever shown than the affair of Cagliostro and the Diamond Necklace. What Court life was may be gathered, apart from intrigue, from one significant phrase: When Louis XV was not going to hunt, it used to be currently said, "The King does nothing to-day."[3] It therefore happened that society migrated from Versailles to Paris, and in the *salons* of certain ladies everybody with more brains than could choke a daw looked for entertainment. There were then no clubs, the *demi-monde* did not exist, and whilst a circle of intimates was formed, general acquaintance was comparatively restricted.

[1] Dr. Johnson's habits in walking show that the wisest are equally susceptible.

[2] *Mémoires*, D'Argenson, Paris, vol. iv.

[3] *The Eighteenth Century*, *supra*, p. 31.

We are in the habit to-day of saying that the art of conversation has been lost. Therefore it is curious to recall that the Duchess d'Abrantès made exactly the same remark in 1830.[1] But the woman of the eighteenth century revealed herself solely, or almost entirely, by this method. Conversation became a profession, the recognized profession of the *salons*. The manifestation of the ability of the woman, her delicacy of observation, her play of vivacity, her intuition, these were never so highly demonstrated as in the period we are dealing with. Possibly women never exercised such stimulating effect—consequently the number of remarkable men is portentous. Let it be emphasized that these women were not blue-stockings. There was only one who could be designated as exceptionally clever, and she of course was Madame du Chatelet. No one more deftly hid her great powers under a lightsome exterior.

Born in 1706 she was a lady-in-waiting at Court, and would be led on to do arithmetical feats to amuse her empty-pated comrades, the most striking being the fact that she multiplied nine figures by nine others in her head. Being sweet and also susceptible, she fell a victim to that Don Juan of the period, the Duke of Richelieu. There were adventures, there was her husband, and then came Voltaire. Voltaire owed her much; it was her sympathy and her clever appreciation that stimulated him to much of his best work. For twenty years they were not parted, and he has left this appreciation of her:

> "Madame du Chatelet united to a taste for fame a simplicity which does not always accompany it, but which is often the fruit of serious studies.

[1] *Une Soirée de Mme. Geoffrin*, Duchess d'Abrantès, Paris, 1838, p. 178.

Never was woman so clever as she, and never did woman less deserve that people should say of her, She is a clever woman. She never spoke of science except to those she thought could instruct her, and never talked to make herself remarkable. She was never known to collect a circle in which there is a war of wit, or where a sort of tribunal is established to judge one's contemporaries, who in return judge oneself very severely. She long lived in a society which did not know her, an ignorance for which she did not trouble herself. The ladies who played with her in the Queen's household never dreamt they were with the commentator of Newton. She wrote more like Pascal and Nicole than like Madame de Sevigné, but this severe strength did not render her less susceptible to the beauties of sentiment. She was affected by the charms of poetry and of eloquence, and no ear was more alive to harmony. She knew by heart the best verse, and could not tolerate the mediocre. She had the advantage over Newton of uniting to the profundity of philosophy the most lively and discriminating interest in literature. It is only to be regretted that a philosopher should be so reduced to the dryness of facts, and that for her are lost the beauties of imagination and of feeling."[1]

It was at Cirey that the two quarrelled in order to have the pleasure of making up the feud; there they translated Leibniz, and Voltaire poured out his masterpieces. Of Madame du Chatelet he wrote: "She puts windows where I put doors, she changes staircases to mantelpieces. She has found the secret of furnishing Cirey from nothing." When he was ill

[1] Preface to Mme. du Chatelet's *Translation of the Principles of Newton*, Paris, 1740.

he also wrote: "Madame du Chatelet yesterday at my bedside read the *Tusculanes* of Cicero in the tongue of this illustrious chatterbox, then she read Pope's fourth epistle on happiness. If you know any woman in Paris who can do as much, send her to me." Of the way in which they lived, Madame de Graffigny first used that immortal phrase "the superfluities which are the necessaries of life."

Madame du Chatelet must have been charming to have so bewitched Voltaire. One trait reveals her; before she left the Court for his sake, some tittle-tattler was telling her she had been slandered, but when he was about to reveal the name she put her hand over his mouth. Voltaire and she fell out because he declared she could not have written one of her poems. (Her enthusiasm for poetry was exceptional in one so devoted to scientific research.) With that strange placability of some French husbands, it was the Marquis du Chatelet who soothed her with the remark, "You may be sure that Voltaire is not deceiving us now." So long as she cried over his letters, the Abbé Voisenon was sure she cared for him. In the last year of her life, when she criticized them, he pronounced her cured. By then her erotic fancy had first cast her into the arms of the mathematician Clairant, and subsequently came her final passion for St. Lambert. On this Voltaire grew furious, whereupon she observed:

"Hush, my husband will hear."

"Ah!" he replied, "there is a responsible husband. I will wash my hands of it."

After her death it was the portrait of St. Lambert which had usurped the place of Voltaire's in her secret ring. The cynic showed it to her husband with the comment:

"This is a thing of which neither of us can boast."

She died at the age of forty-two from the effects of an iced drink taken a week after her confinement. She is less remembered than many less important women; but this cleverest of her sex at that day played no part in the life of the *salons*, her loves and her tastes keeping her from general society.

The women of the *salons* were not erudite, but they had supreme tact. They did not possess learning, but their intuition was infallible. It is for this reason that Abbé Galiani never wrote a line in his prime without submitting it to Madame d'Epinay, insisting on her saying what she thought of each phrase, and not venturing to publish until she was satisfied. D'Alembert with Mdlle. l'Espinasse, Voltaire with Madame du Chatelet, Diderot, Marmontel, and the rest, all show the same phenomena. It results that indirectly the women were the prime movers of the Encyclopædia, and Madame de Geoffrin was called the mother of the Encyclopaedists.

There was one exception: Rousseau, after he had grown to manhood and had forgotten Madame de Warens, never fell under the charm of a woman. He exerted as great an influence on the mind of women as Voltaire did on that of men, for he emancipated them, renewed their souls, and restored pure love to the vitiated heart of the lady of fashion, and sent the child back to her breast.[1] But the man was a boor. He was the Doctor Johnson of France. Both would have been very much greater if the one could have substituted heart for sentiment and the other emotion for sententiousness. In many ways—for instance, tact and self-obliteration for worship's

[1] *La Femme au Dix-huitième Siècle, vide supra*, p. 438.

sake—Boswell was a much greater man than Samuel Johnson.

If the man of literature first presented himself on terms of equality at the Hôtel Rambouillet, he fared even better in the *salon* of Madame de Tencin. She had been intended for a nunnery, but her emotions were too sensuous, and the efforts of the Cardinal, her brother, obtained her secularization. There can be no doubt that the "unveiled *religieuse*" played a prominent part in the debauches of the Regency. Mat. Prior loved her, so did D'Argenson, and so did the Regent himself. She had an insatiable passion in those days for politics, and when this bored the Regent, he would inquire, "And who is the new mistress of your brother?"—that brother being the Cardinal. There seems no doubt that D'Alembert was her illegitimate son, and there is not the slightest proof that she ever tried to claim or reclaim her talented but ill-regulated offspring.[1]

When she grew old, she patronized and courted the writers as ardently as in earlier years she had pursued men of notoriously inflammable temperament. She called her *salon* her menagerie, and her literary *protégés* her beasts. It has even been asserted[2] that in no other *salon* was better talk heard, and her influence over the men with the pen became world-renowned. "Clever people make many more errors because they never believe the world so foolish as it is," she would say. Her ambition was intrigue, and to help this she relied on the writers she patronized and petted. Certainly in her demeanour to them was little to be noted of the Messalina of the Regency.

[1] *Dictionnaire Universelle de XIX Siècle*, Paris, 1875, vol. xiv., p. 1597.
[2] *Mélanges*, Suard, Paris, vol. i.

Giraudon

MADAME GEOFFRIN

FROM THE PORTRAIT BY CHARDIN IN THE MUSEUM AT MONTPELLIER

"A woman little estimable, and some of whose actions are near crimes, one is none the less taken with her air of gentleness, almost of goodness, if one approaches her. She knew the end of the game in everything."[1]

As to her gentleness, Chamfont one day commenting on it to l'Abbé Troublet, received the reply:

"Yes, if she wished to poison you she would choose the least painful drug."

As for her foresight, she observed of France: "Unless God visibly stretches out his hand, it is a physical impossibility to prevent the downfall of the State."

She was also thoroughly wide awake, for in advanced old age she wrote to Pope Benedict XIV: "Madame Geoffrin comes here to pick up what I shall leave."

It may have been true. The fact remains that the *bourgeoise* little Madame Geoffrin established the *salon* of the Encyclopaedists, that tribunal of taste to which Europe came for orders and from which the world received the new fashion in French literature.[2]

Marie Thérèse Rodet was the daughter of the valet of the Dauphin, and she married a nonentity, M. Geoffrin, who is immortal by reason of three tales. Once he went to the Comédie Française and subsequently said: "I cannot tell you the name of the play performed, as I had not time to look at the advertisement."[3] On another occasion, having been given the same volume over and over again without discovering the fact, he observed that the author appeared to be addicted to repeating himself; whilst, when he read the *Encyclopædia*, which was

[1] Saint-Beuve, *Causeries de Lundi*, Paris.

[2] *La Femme au Dix-huitième Siècle*, *vide supra*, p. 462.

[3] *Correspondance*, Grimm, *vide supra*.

printed in two columns, he persisted in reading straight along, line by line.

Some *habitué* asked what had become of the old gentleman who always sat in the corner and said nothing. "That was my husband; he is dead," replied Madame Geoffrin, who herself tells the tale to the Empress Catherine; and to the same correspondent she gives this account of herself:

"I lost my father and my mother when I was in the cradle. I was brought up by an old grandmother who had much sense and her head set right. She had very little learning, but her mind was so clear, so adroit, so active, that it never deserted her; it always took the place of knowledge, She spoke so agreeably about things of which she knew nothing that no one wanted her to know more about them, and when her ignorance became too palpable, she extricated herself by jokes that disconcerted the pedants who would have humiliated her. She was so content with her lot that she regarded knowledge as a very useless thing for a woman. She said, 'I have done so well without it that I have never felt the need. If my granddaughter is a fool, knowledge will make her self-confident and unbearable; if she has wit and sensibility, she will do like me, supplement by skill and with sentiment what she does not know; and when she is more discreet, she will learn what she has most aptitude for and she will learn that quickly.' She therefore in my childhood only taught me to read, but she made me read much; she taught me to think and to reason."

As an old woman she uttered this confession:

"At the age of twenty I made plans for various

ages of my life. I have followed them all and have been always comfortable. It is only the journey to Poland which has proved an extraordinary incident."

Of that more anon. Before she was thirty she dressed like an old woman:[1] "I wished to be beforehand with a difficult period. I desired to make myself old early. When age really comes, it will find me ready."[2]

It was only in middle age that she established her *salon*, having dexterously followed the model of Madame de Tencin and in many ways improved on the original. This is how she impressed Horace Walpole:

"Madame Geoffrin, of whom you have heard so much, is an extraordinary woman with more common sense than I have almost ever met with. She has great promptitude of insight in discovering the characters, penetration in going to the bottom of them, and a pencil that never fails in a likeness—seldom a favourable one. She exacts and preserves, spite of her birth and their nonsensical prejudices about nobility, great court and attention. This she acquired by a thousand little arts and offices of friendship, and by a freedom and severity which seem to be her sole end of drawing a concourse to her; for she insists on scolding those she inveigles to her. She has little taste and less knowledge, but protects artists and authors, and courts a few people to have the credit of serving her dependents. She was bred under the famous Madame Tencin, who advised her never to refuse any man; for, said

[1] *Une Soirée Chez Mme. Geoffrin*, by Duchess d'Abrantès, Brussels, 1837, p. 3.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

her mistress, though nine in ten should not care a farthing for you, the tenth may live to be a useful friend. She did not adopt or reject the whole plan, but fully retained the purport of the maxim. In short, she is an epitome of empire, subsisting by rewards and punishments."[1]

What manner of woman she was comes out in the following:

"Her features were rather heavy; the lips thin and stretched, as though to let fly those short trenchant expressive sentences which are so individualistic; her eyes remained active, piercing, scrutinizing; a slight expression of irony spread over her face; her figure stately and upright; her aspect noble and at ease, an aspect dignified without stiffness, and serious without pedanticism. Her toilette can be summed up as the most careful simplicity combined with the most irreproachable neatness. Invariably dressed in a dress sombre of hue and severe in cut, the collar and cuffs of the plainest and finest linen, her silver hair half covered by a cap fastened by strings under the chin, she presented the most prepossessing figure of old age it was possible to imagine. Her tastes and her years went together like two well-matched horses."[2]

Her habits were delightfully domestic; most typically French; that is to say, illustrative of the best type of housewife, she who is capable and at the same time gay:

"She rose each morning at five, winter or summer, dressed herself, never admitting a maid to her

[1] *Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Peter Cunningham, London, 1891, vol. iv., p. 467. This letter was written to Gray on 25th January, 1766.

[2] *Correspondence*, La Harpe.

room until she was spick and span. Then she superintended the smallest details of her household, attending with great care to the kitchen and making minute provision for the dishes she would set before her guests. Her correspondence was very heavy. She took a daily walk, generally to some studio, or on some charitable errand. She was fond of the maxim, 'If you do good, throw it into the sea, and if the fish swallow it, God will remember.' She was devoted to children, but never tired of inveighing against large families. Even on the days when she did not give dinners, she was always at home to all her acquaintances."[1]

Each Monday she gave a dinner to writers, and each Wednesday to artists, each of the latter receiving a *calotte* (cap of black velvet). To the artists she was kind, going to their studios and watching their work. To her literary friends she displayed a positive mania in the matter of preventing them writing books.[2]

"There are few heads sounder than hers, no heart which can equal the warmth of hers. I never knew any one seize each detail of a character so promptly as her, or paint it so strongly. She particularly excels in the *récit*, always short and lively. Vain, affected people and those who have no merit fear her, but the weaknesses of her friends and even of mere acquaintances who frequent her are sheltered. Nothing escapes her observation and nothing her tongue. Once she cares for people (and when she says so it may be believed), she never leaves them time to have recourse to her for a service;

[1] *Mélanges*, Mme. Necker.
[2] *Une Soirée*, *vide supra*, p. 17.

her attention and her sagacity immediately make her intuitively see how she can be useful."[1]

"I feel with pleasure," she wrote herself, "that as I get old, I become better, for I should not dare to say more. I have taken for my motto the two words of l'Abbé de Saint Pierre, 'Give and Forgive.'" How generous she was will never be known, and with a smile she would excuse her liberality by saying she had "*l'humeur donnanté.*" It may be recalled that she gave Mdlle. L'Espinasse a pension for life, helped many poor authors, was the lever of Marmontel's success, but her friendship with Montesquieu cooled after she did not adequately—as he considered—appreciate his *Spirit of Laws.*[2] When Rulhière read her his *Russian Anecdotes*, she offered to give a sum of money if he would throw the manuscript into the fire. When he protested and grew angry, she only asked, "Do you want more?"

Fontenelle was notoriously mean. She went to him to beg him to help some one he ought to assist.

"So be it," he assented, after hearing all she had to say. "What ought I to give?"

"Twenty-five louis."

"Very well, take them," and he gave her the key of his chest.

Her scolding temperament became as proverbial as her phrase, "Let us be amiable"; and her characteristics were once summed up as "goodness and *brusquerie.*" On one occasion, when she annoyed Greuze by criticizing his work too caustically, he threatened, "Let her tremble lest I immortalize her. I will paint

[1] Lady Hervey in *Letters of Eminent Persons addressed to David Hume*, London, 1849.

[2] *Royaume De La Rue Sainte-Honoré*, Pierre de Sagar, Paris, 1898, p. 39.

her as a schoolmistress, whip in hand, causing terror to all the children present or to come."

There can be no doubt that she controlled within her *salon* all the illustrious men who thronged it. Her "There! that is enough," was a glacial closure to the warmest debate,[1] and besides hating to hear politics mentioned, she was careful not to be compromised and to preserve the peace, which must sometimes have put some constraint upon the contumacious temperaments that foregathered in her room.[2]

"My mind is like my legs," she said; "I like to walk in a flat country, and I will not climb a mountain for the sake of saying I have ascended that mountain."[3]

Most intimate of her gatherings were her little suppers for five or six guests, at which a chicken, some spinach, and an omelette formed the simple fare. It was at these that her speeches grew sharpest. "She talks of gallantry in the simple phrases of the Bible," said Madame Necker, and she herself confessed, "I have never had anything to disentangle in the passions of men. Love is only a transitory sentiment."

Another of her observations: "There are three things the women of Paris throw out of the window—their health, their time, and their money." Small wonder that men like Voltaire, D'Alembert, and Diderot came constantly to her. The uncouth manners of the last had been tolerated by the Empress Catherine, but were not approved by the *bourgeoise* Madame Geoffrin:

> "I received a letter to-day from Mme. Geoffrin, who treated me like a beast, and advised my wife

[1] *Mémoires*, Marmontel, Paris, vol. ii.
[2] *Correspondance*, Grimm, *vide supra*, vol. iv.
[3] Quoted by Saint-Beuve in his *Causeries de Lundi.*

to do the same. The first time she came to spoil my family; this time to spoil my wife and teach her to despise me."[1]

When she was seventy, Horace Walpole left her to frequent the *salon* of Madame du Deffand, and thenceforth he spoke of her as "La Geoffrinska." Stanislas Poniatowski had been one of her most loyal and devoted disciples. When he was made King of Poland, she wrote:

"My dear son, my dear king, my Trinity. I adore you while embracing you. My heart leaps to you, and my body longs to follow. I think I should die of joy if I kissed you. My son, my king. Who is the individual who can say that? Only I."

She soon began to scold and advise him just in the old way. When he wrote to her, "Maman, I am King; come and see me," she set out at the age of sixty-seven, this untravelled little *bourgeoise*, to visit him in Poland. In Vienna, the Empress actually came to meet her, and stopping her coach, presented her little girls to the composed Madame Geoffrin. One of those girls was Marie Antoinette, who thus—she who was to perish on a Parisian scaffold—prophetically bowed to an ignobly born Parisian woman. The Empress was Marie Thérèse, a sovereign as eminent for personal courage as for her devotion to the arts of peace.

At Warsaw, Madame Geoffrin found that Stanislas had fitted up a suite exactly like her own *apartement* in Paris. Fêted, made much of, any head but that of a Frenchwoman would have been turned. But to Voltaire she wrote:

"No, no, my friend; all things remain in the

[1] Letter from Diderot to Mlle. Volland, 15 September, 1767.

state in which I found them, and you will find my heart just what you have always known it, very responsive to friendship."

To D'Alembert:

"Now that I have this journey, I feel that I have seen enough of men and of things to be convinced that they are much the same everywhere. My mind, for the rest of my life, is well stored with reflections and comparisons."[1]

To Baron Gleichen:

"I laughed, my dear Baron, to see the name of Europe joined to mine. What am I in Europe? How do my successes affect foreigners? A few mediocre dinners. You speak of my modesty as of a virtue which is a merit. I should only be presumptuous if I were not modest, for I have no choice. But I am not modest, my dear Baron, because modesty can only be such because of the great advantage sacrificed to it, and I have not the smallest offering to make it. I am humble because I can do nothing. Men have no value in themselves, but by the good or evil that they can do. Nevertheless my nothingness, which I recognize face to face with others, does not crush me face to face with myself. I am conscious of sense, of virtues, of knowledge, of men. These advantages, whilst making me content with myself, make me clearly see that they are only useful for my conduct and consequently for my happiness; but I repeat, not being able to do good or harm, I am nothing to any one.

"I therefore remain humble, but I am so with dignity; that is to say, in abasing myself I would

[1] *Eloges de Madame Geoffrin*, par M. Morellet (Paris, 1812), p. 135.

not permit myself to be humiliated by any one, no matter who. That, my dear Baron, is the portrait of my soul. That of my heart would be equally good to do; I leave the task to my friends."[1]

Previously she had said, "My mind is a roll which unrolls and develops only by degrees. Perhaps when I die it will not all be unrolled." "I have the heart of the age of twenty," she also observed; and later: "When I was in Poland I was sixty-seven, and if I had not looked in the glass I should not have thought myself forty. I felt nothing of old age." She also added with characteristic dryness: "Stanislas the King often said to me that the two most boring Queens that ever existed were his wife and his daughter."[2] Madame Geoffrin does not seem to have dissented, but she was not fond of women, accusing them of scattering conversation, and of directing the attention of her guests to other things than literature and metaphysics. Madame d'Epinay on this subject wrote to L'Abbé Galiani on November 6, 1770:

"It is a problem why she does not like me, for I was made to please her, always tranquilly observing, never eclipsing her, never offending any one, having neither fortune nor ambition, being neither fool nor victorious. It is singular."[3]

Yet at the end of Madame Geoffrin's life, Mdlle. de l'Espinasse decided whom she should or should not receive, only, however, to be dismissed during the old woman's last illness by the intervention of the

[1] This is in the archives of the family of d'Estampes, and was in part quoted by the Abbé Morellet in his *Eulogy of Mme. Geoffrin.*

[2] Manuscript of Mme. de Ferté Imbault, written in July, 1774.

[3] *Mémoires et Correspondance de Madame D'Epinay* (Paris, 1818), vol. iii., p. 308.

daughter, Madame de la Ferté Imbault, who swept from the *salon* all the associates of her mother. That mother once said of her that looking at her she was as much astonished as a hen who had hatched a duck. Now the dying woman let her act as she pleased, observing, "My daughter is like Godfrey de Bouillon, defending my tomb against infidels"; but without a word to her she made a will, by which she betrayed sincere affection to her old friends.

Her death having been attributed to an excess of devotion, L'Abbé Galiani wrote thus to Madame D'Epinay:

> "I have dreamt about this strange metamorphosis, and I have found it the most natural thing in the world. Unbelief is the greatest effort man can make against his own instinct and taste. He is labouring to deprive himself for ever of all the pleasures of the imagination, of all the taste for the marvellous; he is emptying the whole bag of knowledge (and man wants to know everything) to deny or to doubt everything always, and to rest in the impoverishment of all ideas, knowledge, and sublime sciences. What awful void! What nothing! What effort! It is therefore demonstrated that the greater part of men (and especially of women whose imagination is double) cannot be incredulous, and those who can be will only sustain the effort by the greatest strength and youthfulness of the soul. If the soul ages, what belief can restore it?"

Even in a work destined so rigidly to deal with the other sex, I must refer to the singular lack of contemporary appreciation of L'Abbé Galiani, the wittiest, the cleverest of all the men of his time except Voltaire. From his mouth pearls of humour and wisdom

literally poured. It is true that all conversation ceased before the Abbé's turbulent monologue, and just as the House of Commons was bored by Burke, and many of his hearers resented the monologues of Macaulay, so some may have wearied of the little man, only four feet six inches in height, fat as lard, prodigal of gestures, who always wanted to appear funny—yet became the Censor and forbade the *Tartuffe*—who always lay in bed until eleven, yet found time to write many able works. He was a man of colossal intellect, misjudged by posterity simply because he had humour. In the *salons* he was the "jolliest little harlequin produced in Italy," he was the Punch in this show of living Marionettes.

Madame du Deffand occupies a curious position. Owing to her blindness in age she was more dependent on conversation than any other woman of a *salon*, and the pathos of this affliction is apt to throw more sentiment over her situation than is altogether compatible with her tyranny over Mdlle. de l'Espinasse. Madame du Deffand herself, bright and precociously clever, as a girl scandalized the Convent of Madeleine de Troisnel by throwing doubts on the canons of belief. The Mother Superior sent her to the great Massillon to be converted, but it is related that she captivated him with her wit and beauty. This radiant maiden facing the renowned ecclesiastic and uttering such precocious impieties as were like to have occurred to her impish brain, suggests a scene more likely to amuse than to shock a fashionable bishop of that epoch. He said of her, "That girl will go far," having previously observed on receipt of the complaint, "I am sure we shall find a gay, romping girl, who has hidden the spectacles of the abbess and played pranks on the reverend mothers."

Having been married to du Deffand—"I do not know whether he was uglier, stupider, or wickeder"—she cast herself into the most frivolous Parisian society. The debauches of the Palais Royal under the Regency furnish no theme for edification, but it speaks well for the loyalty of Madame du Deffand that she followed Madame de Prie, the leader of these revels, into exile. This woman, who was the wife of the Ambassador to Turin, deliberately made up her mind to become mistress of the Regent, and, despite sundry infidelities, she succeeded so thoroughly that for three years she virtually ruled France. Popular clamour—as has often happened—brought her down justly, but for an unjust reason. She was accused of having foreseen exceptional rains, and of having made what we now term "a corner" in corn. Sent to her country estate, she departed, assuring everybody she would soon return. Finding her error, she tried to obtain distraction by producing plays and reciting poems at her *château*. Then she deliberately fixed the day and hour when she would commit suicide, and at the age of twenty-nine made the attempt. She survived to be the mistress of a *salon*, and to die (in 1780) at an advanced age.

It was to establish a *salon*, then, that she came back to Paris. The attributes that enabled her to succeed may be gathered from this analysis:—

> "As her talents had been happily thrown together by nature, they were no less happy in the circumstances which attended their progress and development. They were refined, not by a course of solitary study, but by desultory reading, and chiefly by living intercourse with the brightest geniuses of her age. Thus trained they acquired a pliability

of movement which gave to all their exertions a bewitching air of freedom and negligence, and made even their least efforts seem only the exuberances or flowerings-off of a mind capable of higher excellencies, but unambitious to attain them. There was nothing to alarm or overpower. On whatever topic she touched, trivial or severe, it was alike in playful fashion; but in the midst of this sportiveness her genius poured itself forth in a thousand delightful fancies, and scattered new graces and ornaments on every object within its sphere. In its wanderings from the trifles of the day to grave questions of morals or philosophy, it carelessly struck out and as carelessly abandoned the most profound truths; and while it aimed only to amuse, suddenly astonished and electrified by rapid traits of illumination, which opened the depths of difficult subjects and roused the researches of more systematic reasoners. To these qualifications were added an independence in forming opinions and a boldness in avowing them which wore at least the semblance of honesty; a perfect knowledge of the world and that facility of manners which in the commerce of society supplies the place of benevolence."[1]

Yet the key to her character is perhaps supplied by her remark to an Englishwoman who had adopted a little girl:

"You care much for that child; you are lucky. I have never been able to love anything."

The same spirit is shown in her answer to her old friend, Pont de Veyle, when he asked her: "After forty years, why have we never quarrelled?"

[1] The material for this is extracted from the *Quarterly Review* for March, 1811.

"I don't know; perhaps because we have never loved one another," was her mournful answer.

There was a vivacious independence in her nature, shown by the letter she wrote to her confessor when he had rebuked her on two points:

"As for rouge and the President, I will not do either of them the honour of leaving them."

In her last illness she sent for the *curé* of S. Sulpice, and, when he arrived, observed to him with the sublime confidence of an accomplished woman of the world:

"You are certainly going to be pleased with me; see that I am with you. Spare me three things—questions, reasons, sermons," and therewith she composed herself to listen to him.

How she impressed Horace Walpole remains to us in a memorable pen and ink sketch:—

> "Madame du Deffand was for a short time mistress of the Regent, is now very old and stone-blind, but retains all her vivacity, wit, memory, judgment, passions, and agreeableness. She goes to operas, plays, suppers, and Versailles; gives suppers twice a week; has everything new read to her; makes new songs and epigrams, aye, admirably, and remembers every one that has been made these fourscore years. She corresponds with Voltaire, dictates charming letters to him, contradicts him, is no bigot to him or anybody, and laughs both at the clergy and the philosophers. In a dispute, into which she easily falls, she is very warm, and yet scarce ever in the wrong; her judgment on every subject is as just as possible; on every point of conduct as wrong as possible; for she is all love and hatred, passionate for her friends to enthusiasm,

still anxious to be loved, I don't mean by lovers, and a vehement enemy, but openly. As she can have no amusement but conversation, the least solitude and *ennui* are insupportable to her and put her into the power of several worthless people, who eat her suppers when they cannot eat anybody's of higher rank; wink to one another and laugh at her; hate her because she has forty times more parts—and venture to hate her because she is not rich."[1]

The crisis of her life came in her quarrel with Mlle. de l'Espinasse, and this was at a late stage in her existence. Julie Jeanne de l'Espinasse was the illegitimate daughter of Madame Albon and an unknown father, most probably Cardinal Tencin. It was said of Julie that she never broke her word, and when her mother left her a small sum of money on condition she should never attempt to establish her birthright, she never made the slightest effort. From a convent where she had been kept unduly long, she had become her mother's companion, and on her death took the same humiliating position to her own legitimate sister, the Marquise de Vichy. Madame du Deffand heard of her and acquired her, and thus wrote to the Duchess de Luynes in 1754:

"I am blind, I feel all the misfortune of my position, and it is natural to seek means to soften it. Nothing would be more suitable than to have near me some one to keep me company, and to save me from *ennui* and solitude. Chance has caused me to meet a person whose mind, character, and fortune suit me extremely well. She is a girl of twenty-

[1] *Letters*, Horace Walpole, *vide supra*, vol. iv., p. 470.

two years of age, who has no parents who own her, or at least who wish and who ought to own her."

To the girl herself she wrote:

"Pack up, my queen, and come and make the happiness and consolation of my life. It won't be my fault if this is not reciprocal."

For twelve years the slave of the whims of this despotic old tyrant, blind, wilful, malicious, Julie herself was delicate, weak-chested, and as passionately susceptible as are so many prone to her complaint. She had to sit up all night either at Madame du Deffand's or else at Madame de Luxembourg's, when the aged autocrat went there. Until six each evening the blind old woman did not rise. An hour earlier, however, Mdlle. de l'Espinasse, in her own little room, surreptitiously received the immediate intimates of her mistress: D'Alembert, of course, Turgot, Chastellux, Marmontel, all foregathered in those delicious moments of spontaneous gaiety, when they all felt like naughty children not found out.

Discovery came, and the explosion between the elder and the younger woman irrevocably affected both their lives. "It was a treason," said the blind woman, and the excited girl took forty grains of opium. While she was ill Madame du Deffand softened and was heard to say, "Come back, my dear child." Later there was the stern reprisal, "It is too late to show me pity."[1]

Mdlle. de l'Espinasse—"the woman with the continual smile"—carried away well-nigh the whole court of Madame du Deffand. She lived in the plainest way, but Hénault wished to marry her and D'Alem-

[1] *Une Soirée, vide supra*, p. 47.

bert, the dearest associate of Madame du Deffand, told to choose between the two, never hesitated. His love for Julie was a crucifixion, for she never loved him, and he carried her letters to her lovers, participated in her joys and sorrows, whilst he—the man without family, perhaps drawn to her by that link—lavished devoted care on her for eight faithful years. She never did more than tolerate his passion; to have reciprocated it perhaps might have too generously rewarded one of the most generous loves in literature.

To one like myself, who has made a study of these matters, there is nothing surprising that this woman, thrown among those intensely clever men of the Encyclopædist group, should have cast her passionate affection on two handsome nonentities. It proves what to me is a truism, that no great, no clever man has ever really been loved. The Comte de Maura was ten years the junior of Mlle. de l'Espinasse, but "passion has no age and no sense of humour." For five years her infatuation for him never left her a rational moment. Then his family obtained his recall to Spain, and amid the delirium of their agonized parting—to which D'Alembert was the martyrized agent—before the dying Spaniard had gone to his account, she had cast herself into her yet greater infatuation for de Guibert, excusing herself for her infidelity to de Maura by calling it fatality.

"My friend," she wrote to de Guibert, "I suffer, I love you, I await you"; and when at first he did not respond, came the cry from her heart, "Ah! you have well avenged Maura."

Later:

"Are you cruel enough to forget you are loved with passion? And if you remember, how have

you failed to let me hear of you? Do you not know that it was to deliver my soul over to a mortal sorrow to make me anxious about you? My friend, if you could have caused me to avoid what I suffer you are very culpable, and it seems to me such a wrong ought to cure me. But, my God, is one free? Can I calm myself, grow cold according to my own will or even yours? Ah! I can only love you and suffer, that is the feeling of my heart: I can neither stop nor excite it, but I would like to die. I have thoughts which are an active passion. Yet they are not prompt enough."[1]

Later:

"My friend, it seems to me you have rights over all the movements and all the feelings of my soul. I owe you an account of all my thoughts; I can only assure myself of their correctness by communicating them to you. Listen and judge my judgment, or rather my instinct, for I have only that for matters of mind, of taste, of art."[2]

Here in a phrase we get the keynote of the value of all these women to the Encyclopaedist group; it was their instinct which formed an important factor in the coming Revolution. The end of this romance was that the excess of her devotion bored de Guibert. He married Mlle. de Courcelles, obtaining this from Mlle. de l'Espinasse:

"You have made me know all the tortures of the damned, repentance, hatred, jealousy, remorse, self-contempt."

[1] *Correspondance entre Mlle. de l'Espinasse et Le Comte de Guibert*, Paris, 1906, p. 177.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 239.

Her health was shattered. Only on her death-bed had she pity for D'Alembert: yet her legacy to him was her correspondence with de Guibert. Here is the last letter that probably she ever wrote:

"My friend, I love you; it is a sedative that increases my pain. It only rests with you to change it to poison, and of all poisons it will be the quickest and most violent. Alas! I find it so bad to live that I am ready to implore your pity and your generosity to grant me this succour. It will terminate a dolorous agony that will soon weigh on your soul. Ah! my friend, act that I may owe my repose to you, in charity be cruel for once. I extinguish myself. Adieu!"[1]

Madame du Deffand wrote:

"Mlle. de l'Espinasse died last night at two in the morning. Formerly it would have been an event; to-day it is nothing."

Everything had been against poor Julie; yet she had the most womanly genius, and when people talked to her they never felt how clever she was, but how clever they were.[2] That was the secret of the influence of the woman whose exquisite sympathy became heartless only when her passions were stirred. She never reached that benign old age so often the feminine outcome of the then fashionable view that nothing was better than happiness, and that it lay in moderation. "If we dissolve in smoke, that kind of destruction would not be unpleasant to me, but I do not like burial," said Madame du Deffand to Madame de Choiseul; while Madame de Lambert's view was: "The

[1] *Correspondance entre Mlle. de l'Espinasse et Le Comte de Guibert*, Paris, 1906, p. 536.

[2] *Women of the Salons*, S. G. Tallentyre, London, 1897, p. 32.

idea of the last act is always sad. However fine the comedy, the curtain falls, the most beautiful lives end just the same, the earth is thrown on them, and there they are for eternity."[1]

How great was the interest excited in science may be imagined by the instance that at the age of eighteen the Comtesse de Coigny was so fascinated that she never travelled without a skeleton to study.[2] Women needed an object, so they attended lectures, as they do to-day; to which I, who am a lecturer, naturally raise no objection.

Madame d'Epinay is, however, the most brilliant light of the times. Friend of Voltaire, Grimm, Galiani, Rousseau, Holbach, Duclos, and Diderot, she wears the most smiling face of her age.

As a girl, Louise Florence Pétronville d'Esclavelles had cowered beneath her mother's severity. She herself fell in love with her cousin D'Epinay, was married at nineteen, and on her wedding day had a delicious altercation as to whether she should wear rouge. Her mother-in-law said No, her husband Yes.[3] She herself told the story. For a year all went well. When her husband's infidelity was found out, her brother-in-law said, "What does it signify? for he will not love you less in his heart." That husband himself introduced her to the notorious Mlle. D'Ette, who became her friend and her evil genius. Later there was Mlle. de Quinault, to whose *salon* D'Alembert came after the death of Mlle. de l'Espinasse, a witty woman who died in her drawing-room while she was talking. Madame D'Epinay found others

[1] *La Femme au Dix-huitième Siècle, vide supra*, p. 324.

[2] *Memoirs*, Mme. de Genlis, vol. i.

[3] *La Jeunesse de Mme. d'Epinay*, L. Perry and G. Maugras, Paris, 1882, p. 149.

more assiduous than her own husband. At thirty, Diderot relates that she was—

> "Painted, leaning on a table, her arms softly folded, head a little turned as if she looked to one side, her long black hair knotted with a ribbon bound over her brow. Some locks have escaped this ribbon; some fall on her throat, others on her shoulders and relieve their whiteness. It is the image of tenderness and voluptuousness."

It was at Mlle. de Quinault's—"the Ninon of the century," as Franceuil called her—that the intimacy, first begun between Rousseau and Madame D'Epinay at La Chevrette, ripened; and when he said "The idea of God is necessary to happiness," Louise agreed with the addition that "We only believe as deep as we live." After this she had a becoming fit of contrition and wanted to be a Carmelite, until l'Abbé Martin told her her duty lay in the world, which she found more attractive. It is notable that she created a sensation in Parisian society by bringing up her own child before Rousseau had advocated it, and made maternal attention a fashionable craze.

There was an unpleasant accusation that she had burnt some letters, and Melchior Grimm, who barely knew her, became her champion and fought for her. He was introduced to her by Rousseau. D'Epinay having left his wife, Franceuil having grown cold, and Duclos having proved himself a brute, Grimm began a connection that lasted until her death—twenty-seven years later.

At this period Madame D'Epinay offered Rousseau —whom she called "My bear"—a shelter in L'Hermitage. He answered, "Oh! you want to make me a valet, a dependent with your gift"—but he took it.

His "repulsive and equivocal personality has deservedly fared ill in the esteem of the saner and more rational of those who have judged him."[1] His own *Confessions* have thrown light on the early kindness to him of Madame de Warens, a Protestant who, having been converted, had to leave Switzerland, and established herself at Vevey. There, at the age of sixteen, came Rousseau, whom she befriended and educated. He called her "Maman."

> "She had those beauties which last, because they are more in the physiognomy than in the features. She had a caressing and tender air, a very soft glance, an angelic smile, a mouth of the measure of mine, blonde hair of uncommon beauty. She was small of stature, even short and rather bent, though not deformed; but it was impossible to see a more lovely head, a more beautiful bosom, more lovely hands and arms."[2]

Later, when she had parted from de Tavel, her first lover and her master in philosophy, she and Rousseau assumed more tender relations. The overwhelming character of the obligations he owed to Madame D'Epinay have been confessed by his latest and most extravagant defender.[3] Later he believed that she, Grimm, and others were all involved in some malicious and complicated plot against his own supersensitive self. He accused her of being the wickedest of women at a time when he was falling on his knees before her and imploring her pardon with tears in his eyes for all his faults.[4] Long before

[1] *Rousseau*, John Morley, London, 1873, vol. i.

[2] *Les Confessions*, J. J. Rousseau, Paris, edition published in 1859, p. 44.

[3] *Jean Jacques Rousseau*, Frederika Macdonal, London, 1906, vol. i., p. 273.

[4] *Diderot*, Maurice Tourneux, Paris.

this he had made her sister-in-law, Madame D'Houdetot, the Julie of his *Nouvelle Héloïse*, and there was also the gross fact that he married the coarse, brutal, vulgar animal, Thérèse.

> "He saw Thérèse in contrast to himself. She was at one with herself. Unfortunately his faith was a delusion. She was no unspoiled child of nature.[1] We have abundant proofs that she did not care for him in the least, and that she was quite ready when it suited her purposes to set his wishes at defiance."[2]

Of the sweetness of Madame de Warens there can be no question. "She took off her finger her last jewel and gave it to Thérèse, who put it on her own at once, kissing that noble hand which she had bathed with her tears." Of the veracity of Madame D'Epinay, involved in endless recriminations by Rousseau, it is best to say it was invidious. Yet her memoirs are not a book only, they give us an epoch. All the literature of the time is in Grimm; all the life of society is in Madame D'Epinay.[3] She herself changed more than most women, because of the adaptability of her character to her experience, and because she profited by the lessons of suffering.[4] She was now charming without being pretty, a witty woman who did not possess much education. Yet she abundantly helped Grimm in editing that *Correspondance Générale*, was at the fountain-head of the Encyclopaedia, and of herself had written:

> "I am not pretty, I am none the less not ugly: I am small, thin, very well made; I have an air of youth

[1] *Jean Jacques Rousseau*, *vide supra*, vol. i. p. 175.
[2] *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 160.
[3] *Causeries de Lundi*, Saint-Beuve, Paris.
[4] *Melchior Grimm*, E. Scherer, Paris, 1887, p. 168.

without freshness, noble, soft, *vif*, *spirituel* and interesting. My imagination is tranquil. My mind slow, just, reflective, and *sans suite*. In my soul I have vivacity, courage, firmness, elevation, and excessive timidity. I am true without being frank. Timidity has often given me an appearance of dissimulation and falseness, but I have always had courage to avow my feebleness, to destroy suspicion of a vice I did not possess. I have dexterity to reach my end and overcome obstacles, but I have none for penetrating the objects of others. I was born tender and sensitive, constant and not a coquette. I love a quiet, simple and secluded life, but I have nearly always led one contrary to my taste. Bad health and active and repeated sorrows have rendered serious my naturally gay disposition. There is barely a year I have begun to know myself."[1]

Her ill-health, eventually proved to be cancer,[2] took her to Geneva to consult Dr. Tronchin. With her went her son and his tutor, recalling the observation that "she was one of those women who write moral treatises on education in the brief leisure left them by their lovers." Later, when Grimm had gone as envoy to Frankfort, she returned to Paris to establish a *salon*, which in a marked degree became the resort not only of the Encyclopaedists, but of the Diplomatic Corps. Over them she exerted none of the power of more arbitrary hostesses; perhaps it was too much her amiable failing to agree with the last speaker. She made a great success as a grandmother,[3] but survived most of those she knew best, and on her death-bed

[1] *Mémoires*, Mme. D'Epinay, Paris, 1818.

[2] *Melchior Grimm*, *vide supra*, footnote to p. 310.

[3] To wit, by her *Conversations d'Emilié*, Paris, 1775.

she sent Grimm a lock of her hair and a copy of verses. She died as she had lived, with bright gaiety; a delicious woman, who had sinned probably from inconsequence and amiability, and whose generosity left her so poor that Catherine wrote to Grimm with admirable delicacy:

> "Take money up to twice eight thousand livres, give them to the author of *Conversations d'Emilié*; in case she will not accept it, lend it to her for fifty years, and above all, don't speak to me or to any one else any more about it, but tell me simply 'I have given or lent the twice eight thousand livres.'"[1]

The main characteristic of this Catherine II of Russia was that she exerted all her statecraft on her own initiative, whilst she showed marvellous suppleness, first to assimilate, and then to control her surroundings. "I was brought up to marry some small neighbouring prince, and was taught only what was necessary for that," she herself said. Yet Diderot has called her "the chandelier bearing the light of her century." From that tiny principality of Anhalt Zerbst, where she was known as Fischen, she was chosen, as the result of intrigues, to become the wife of the wretched Peter of Russia, who, on his first meeting with her, recounted his *amours* with a maid of honour. Catherine's own trousseau was "two or three dresses, a dozen chemises, and as many stockings and handkerchiefs."

Her terrifying mother-in-law, the Empress Elizabeth, had once found a rival in the hapless Eudoxia Laponkhine. Elizabeth caused Eudoxia's tongue to be pierced with a red-hot iron, and made the executioner administer twenty strokes of the knout when she was

[1] *Melchior Grimm, vide supra*, p. 311.

about to be confined. This devout sovereign would spend hours praying to the Virgin to indicate from which company of her guards she should choose her lover for the day. Her Majesty had also a marked preference for strong liquors.[1]

From the beginning there was no hope of any happiness in the matrimonial union of Peter and Catherine. The latter politically took the side opposed to her husband, and, warned in time by Countess Daschkoff—sister of the Tzar's mistress, herself an eccentric who loved to wear military uniform[2]—she escaped from his vengeance. Over what subsequently happened there is some mystery, but the result was the abdication and murder of Peter, leaving Catherine Tzarina of Russia. This is her portrait—a dispassionate one:—

> "Her figure is agreeable and noble, her deportment proud; her person and her demeanour full of grace. Her air is that of a sovereign. All these traits announce a great character. Her neck is long and her head very well moulded: the union of these two parts, especially in the profile, reveals remarkable beauty, also in the movements of the head. She has a broad and open forehead, the nose nearly aquiline; her mouth is fresh and embellished by her teeth; her chin rather large and inclined to double, although it is not fat. Her hair is of chestnut and of the greatest beauty; her eyebrows brown; her eyes brown and very handsome; reflections of light in them cause blue nuances to appear, and her complexion is dazzling. Pride is the true characteristic of her physiognomy."[3]

[1] *Mémoires*, Chevalier d'Éon.

[2] *La Grande Catherine*, Capefique, Paris, 1862, p. 18.

[3] *Histoire ou anecdotes sur la Révolution de Russie en 1762*, C. C. de Rulhière, Paris, 1797.

Whatever she did she brought all her attention to bear upon, which was why she told Grimm she was never bored. She made gaiety part of her system, and insisted on it. The Prince de Ligne said:

> "She laughed at the most wretched thing, an anecdote, some rubbish, mere nothing. It was this contrast between the simplicity of what she said and the great things that she did which made her *piquante*."

Her temperament was quick, sanguine, and impetuous. Her private life was stained by boundless immoralities, and her statesmanship was too often, as in the case of Poland, of a tyrannous character.[1] She was methodical, a small eater and less of a drinker, and never allowed an improper jest although she paraded her lovers. Occasionally she had a quaint phrase, as when she wrote on an injudicious proposition, "A saddle does not suit a cow."

Her political tendencies were those of Russia of to-day. She was like Janus of old, with two faces, one to the East the other to the West. If her European policy was pacification, her Asiatic one was conquest. She foresaw the value of Persia to Russia on the road to India. The dream of an Oriental Empire was in her brain. Constantinople, Ispahan, and Kabul were all points towards which she aspired. Her intuition set the direction in which all Russian diplomacy has since moved.

She kept on good terms with the clergy, and had the sense to assemble what was virtually a Duma, which proved tumultuous yet voted her thanks as to "the mother of her country," a fact speedily recorded

[1] *Le Roman d'Une Impératrice*, K. Waliszewski, Paris, third ed. 1893, p. 235.

on a fine medal. She showed skill in handling men:

> "Assuredly men of merit are never lacking at any time, for those are the men who manage affairs, and it is affairs that produce the men. I have never searched, and I have always found under my hand the men who have served me, and for the most part I have been well served."[1]

Most of her lovers, far younger than herself, she dispatched as her foreign emissaries. The most notable, Potemkin, said, "When this charming woman enters a sombre place she lights it up." She showed munificence in rewarding explorers—Strutz, Behring, and Billing—notably contrasted to the stinginess of Queen Elizabeth of England.

Her relations with the French philosophers of the *Encyclopaedia* show her profound grasp of statecraft. She saw the philosophers were setting the tone of all Europe, and she seized the opportunity of the apathy of the French King to become their patron. Queen Victoria never surrounded herself with literary men, so her personality will have little record among posterity. Elizabeth of England and Catherine of Russia (like Margaret of Navarre) acted differently, and to-day they live to us in immortal familiarity.

Catherine offered D'Alembert to publish the *Encyclopaedia* in Russia, where she assured him he would find complete freedom of opinion. Her enormous correspondence is divisible into those letters she wrote, those she composed, and those she ordered to be composed.[2] Diderot had amused her, Voltaire from a distance had flattered her, but Grimm charmed

[1] *Le Roman d'Une Imperatrice*, K. Waliszewski, Paris, third ed. 1893, p. 313.

[2] *Autour d'Un Trône*, K. Waliszewski, Paris, 1894, p. 360.

her, and it is to him that she wrote most frankly. No doubt with her pen she could not reproduce the charm and the power of her conversation, to which Grimm has rendered such tribute. Yet her letters to him are unique. Every three months she sent him, by a courier, a packet containing a sort of journal. There are hyperboles in his language to her, but he really regarded her as a superior being, himself as worshipper of a celestial patron.[1] Catherine had the same desire to purchase the art-treasures of Western Europe as have American millionaires of our time, and Grimm was her agent. To him she confided her views about a Russian counterpart of Saint-Cyr. Among her literary opinions was one that Beaumarchais did not make her laugh, and it became evident that what she appreciated was the political tendencies of the Encyclopaedists. She wanted D'Alembert to become President of her Academy. She seriously considered whether the State ought not to take all children at the age of six, and develop them under claustral restrictions until they were twenty. This version of Rousseau's theory remained sterile. But among the women who affected the Encyclopaedists, Catherine has a niche. One stern instruction to the Governor of Moscow shows to what extent the Semiramis of the North had absorbed their views:

> "Instruction must not be given to the lower orders; when they know as much as you and I, Marshal, they will no longer obey as they do to-day."[2]

There were other *salons* than those cited in Paris,

[1] See his phrases in his *Mémoire Historique:* also *Melchior Grimm, vide supra*, p. 280.

[2] Letter from Catherine to Count Peter Soltykoff, quoted in *Le Roman d'Une Imperatrice, vide supra*, p. 494.

but they have not the same historical value. Among them may be cited that of Madame Doublet de Persan, who never left her apartment and who issued manuscript sheets of gossip. Two registers were always open on her table, one for authentic, the other for doubtful, news. One *bureau d'esprit* was that of Madame d'Houdetot, notable for the exceptional display of harmony between herself and St. Lambert, who assisted in doing the honours. Another was that of Madame Dupin, concerning which Rousseau observed, "Though her reserved manners did not attract many young people, the society which frequented her drawing-rooms was for that very reason all the more dignified." The net result is to give the pleasantest survey of human society that has been possible in modern times, a society, however, soon to be engulfed in the *Danse Macabre* of the imminent Revolution.

WOMEN OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

HISTORY is more than its incidents, it is the movement of man.[1] So runs one of the most recent enunciations of an American authority. To trace the decline and fall of French society towards its downfall in the Revolution would be beside the scope of this work, except so far as one cause has been shown in the increasing moral turpitude of the Court. The Revolution was inevitable before Marie Antoinette ever entered France, but her careless extravagance and wilful folly undoubtedly accelerated the catastrophe. If the hapless Queen reaped the whirlwind, she merely gathered the harvest she had so injudiciously sown.

A web of romance has been woven round a figure which only deserves pity because of the misfortunes that closed an unsatisfactory career. It is doubtful if Marie Antoinette was beautiful: for one thing, she had the Hapsburg lip, and also her brow was unshapely. Court flattery guided the obsequious pen of the panegyrist and the brush of the artist, but the real woman is difficult to discern. Certainly her mother, Marie Thérèse, did not think her lovely; still the *blond de la reine* became the vogue, and if a Queen attains the importance of being a social cult,

[1] *Life's Enthusiasms*, by President Starr Jordan, of Stanford University, 1907.

then, as with Cleopatra and Mary Stuart, posterity will thoughtlessly accept good looks over which unprejudiced contemporaries never raved. Marie Antoinette was wilful, capricious, and captivating, with enough unreasonableness to ruin any monarchy. Her tactlessness culminated when she quarrelled with the one possible saviour of her family and of her aristocracy—Turgot—because he disapproved of her extravagance in jewellery.

Even her adulating attendant, Mme. Campan, confesses she was barely educated. The neurotic women who represent certain sets to-day would say that all her follies were excusable because for seven years her husband did not make her a mother. When she was one, she only grew worse. The lax Court of Louis XV was scandalized by her contempt of etiquette. She drove in *fiacres* to public balls in Paris, compromised herself with the Comte d'Artois, ran the whole gamut of heedless and wilful high spirits, until the venomous Frederic the Great had a nude statue made of her with her name on it, and the outrage passed unrebuked. She dominated her slow husband and felt only contempt for him.

Perhaps the climax, not only in the career of Beaumarchais but of his sovereign, was when she played Rosina in his *Barber of Seville* at Little Trianon. "The Queen was infinitely vivacious in her part."[1] During the rehearsals came the scandal of the diamond necklace and the arrest of Cardinal de Rohan. When the storm burst, Marie Antoinette received it, as she subsequently received every popular movement, with an indifference characteristic of the House of Hapsburg. Nothing could abase her pride, and during the folly of the famous repast of the Body-

[1] *The Friends of Voltaire*, S. G. Tallentyre, London, 1906, p. 262.

guards, when the national cockades were said to have been trampled upon,[1] she wandered round the tables, encouraging her mercenaries to resist the irresistible people.

Once in Paris, with the mob rampant round her barred windows in the Temple, she clearly realized that her only hope of relief lay in succour from foreign arms, directly her own attempt at flight proved abortive. Among other fallacies now disproved is the piteous tale of her ill-treatment in prison.[2] Her downfall was sufficiently crushing, but it was not aggravated by penury because the allowance for her maintenance was ample. Her condemnation was entirely on suspicion, for no adequate proofs were brought forward at her trial. "My plan is not denial; it is the truth that I have said, and I persist in that," was her dignified assertion. To the basest suggestion ever made by an advocate, she retorted:

"I have not answered, because Nature refuses to answer such a charge brought against a mother. I appeal to all the mothers that are here."

Grey at thirty-eight, the guillotine embraced one more dignified in misfortune than in success.

This hapless Isolde found a loving Brangane in the faithful Princess de Lamballe, universally regarded as fascinating, and against whom the worst criticism has been that she had bad hands.[3] Whilst the Queen was captivated by the more attractive manners of the Duchess de Polignac, the friendship cooled. In the hour of need she was beside her mistress; then fled

[1] *Mémoires of Mme. Rochejacquelin*, Paris, p. 40. She was present, and denies this, however.

[2] *Histoire du Tribunal Révolutionnaire*, Paris, 1866; *Marie Antoinette à la Conciergerie*, Paris, 1863; both by Campardon; also *Louis XVII*, by A. de Beauchesné, Paris, 1853.

[3] *Mémoires of Madame de Genlis*, Paris, 1825.

to England, where she intrigued with desperate energy. Back in France, she fell a victim on reluctantly emerging from one prison to go to another. Her head, cleft with an axe by some unknown butcher, was paraded on a pike in front of the window of her imprisoned mistress,[1] whilst her body was hacked into little pieces and obscenely handled.

She was one of the gentlest of Frenchwomen, and yet, with all their charm, Frenchwomen are not generally gentle. United to their energy is the fact that many of them grow moustaches, even at an early age, and women with moustaches have usually masculine qualities. According to one German: "Of the French of all centuries it can be said that they have always been under a woman's thumb . . . and as the centuries pass, these peculiarly energetic women gain such influence in France that history can be divided into whole periods according to the ruling women."[2] There is some truth in this.

Just as the Revolution forms the climax to all the French history that had preceded it, so women took a significant lead in that convulsion. According to Michelet, "women formed the vanguard"[3] of the movement. They directed and they encouraged; too often they resembled furies exulting in the unrestrained exercise of the passion of cruelty. It was not until Napoleon established an Empire that women became coerced. Napoleon himself found a tremendous motive-force in Josephine, but he valued women imperially. He pulled their ears, upbraided them, made use of them, but always masterfully even when

[1] *La Princesse de Lamballe*, by de Lescure, Paris, 1864.

[2] *Deutsche Geschichte Im. 19 Jadt.*, by Heinrich von Treitschkes, Leipzig, 1879, vol. i.

[3] *Les Femmes de la Révolution*, by Michelet, edited by Clarètie, Paris, 1898.

he loved. And they curtsied to him and accepted his valuation of them. During the Revolution it was different. Amid the so-called equality of man, woman shrilly claimed a place maintained by excess of excitement and a banal disregard for the usual refinements intuitive in her sex.

The Revolution was a democratic movement against the aristocracy, and the women of the Halles directed their fury against the ladies of the privileged classes. They deprived them, in the name of liberty, of the rights they formerly possessed. For instance, abbesses ranked with abbots, and contributed their votes with those of the clergy, because women in possession of a fief enjoyed the right to vote in municipal and provincial assemblies. It has also been proved that nobles and clergy were elected to the National Assembly by the votes of women.[1]

That National Assembly grandiloquently entrusted the protection of the Convention to the wives and mothers of Frenchmen "so that the oak of the citizens might be entwined with the myrtle of love." The National Convention further laid down that the term "citoyen" was as applicable to the citizen-woman as to the citizen-man. Liberty was to be regardless of sex. Political equality was set up, at least in theory. But up to 1789 there had been no suffragettes, such as we now see in England. The only important demand for political rights for women came in 1788 from a man, Condorcet, who had found an affinity in an intellectual and lovely woman much younger than himself. His ideas received no active reproduction until the publication of the treatise on

[1] *Women in the French Revolution*, by Theodor Bitterauf. Lecture in the Jewish Branch of the Society for Promoting the Interests of Women, January 31st, 1906.

the subjection of woman by John Stuart Mill. The more thoughtful women were concerned with the question of education. What Rousseau had voiced in such exquisite prose was bearing fruit in many breasts. The common education of both boys and girls at the expense of the State was a favoured proposal, whilst the national festivals—on which much stress was laid because they exercised such fascination over the French, who are naturally vivacious—were enlisted in the service of popular education.

With this Condorcet was not satisfied. Following up his previous views, he now published an essay[1] "on the admission of women to civic rights" which would be absolutely topical to-day. His contention was that the intellectual incapacity of a woman cannot be proved, as it merely results from difference of education. As a counterbalance to those men who are superior to women, there are also many women superior to the average male. To the oft-quoted statement that a woman obeys her feelings in preference to her conscience, he retorts by attributing any fault to social influence and to injudicious up-bringing. The lack of genius in women he regards as no argument against their having votes, because stupidity has never disfranchised men. The influence of women over men he regards as so much the more terrible as it is the more concealed. If it be open he assents to it. In scathing answer to the allegation that the exercise of political rights unfits women for their vocation, he replies that it would be no more likely to spoil women for their households than workmen for their trades. All equality, he contends, is conducive to morality, for inequality not only leads to corruption, but is almost its only source.

[1] *Collected Works of Condorcet*, edited by Arago, Paris, vol. viii.

Condorcet wrote thus, inspired by a wife who was also a friend; one achieving social success and estimating it very low. He—himself a marquis—proposed the abolition of brevets of nobility, and was elected a member of the National Convention. Then, a true aristocrat at heart, he issued an Appeal on the project of the new Constitution. Denounced by Chabot, he was for nine months protected by the widow of Vernet, the sculptor, a woman who knew that, for a man without the least claim on her, she was endangering her own life. Madame Condorcet, reduced to beggary, earned her living by painting miniatures, and sometimes, disguised as a peasant, spent a few moments with her husband in his hiding-place. After the fall of the Girondins he was arrested, but cheated the guillotine by means of a poison he had long carried concealed in a ring. For her child's sake the loving wife had petitioned for a divorce. She obtained it, six weeks after her husband's death. She survived him many years, residing peacefully in Paris, and though she had suffered trials which would have crushed most women, she always called herself happy because she had inspired a great devotion. She merited it.

The Revolution had authorised divorce, whereas the Church had never recognized it. Numbers of women availed themselves of this State liberation. Another of the acts of the Revolution was to free women from parental authority, an innovation absolutely antagonistic to the Gallic temperament, where family principles are inviolable so far as outward respect goes. Such changes would alone account for any individual feminine irregularities, the overturning of inherited mental conditions being so complete.

It was one of the curious preludes to the Revolution

that so many of the aristocracy were democratic—a thing paralleled in social England of to-day. At the Palais Royal debates were inaugurated by Abbé Fanchet, who endeavoured to form a sort of free-masonry lodge consisting of a social circle of friends of truth. Even here the negative argument was heard:

> "The woman's throne is in the midst of her family. Her honour is in the honour of the children she has reared. Cornelia was neither senator, nor general, nor consul. She was mother of the Gracchi."

Then uprose a Dutch dame, Etta Palm, who deftly utilized the prevalent craze for imitating the ancient Romans:

> "As the French have become Romans, we copy the virtues and patriotism of the Roman women."

She won the unanimous approval of her hearers, but modest demands such as she and Condorcet made were soon to be surpassed.

Olympia de Gonges became the mouthpiece of the feminine progressive movement, and it is curious that she adopted her energetic tone when far advanced in middle age. She had become a widow at sixteen,[1] after being regarded as a prodigy of childish knowledge. She wrote plays, poetical letters and pamphlets, one biting sarcasm, long popular, being that she kept a secretary to teach her orthography. It was she who matched the declaration of the rights of man with a declaration of the rights of woman, commencing:

> "Woman is born free and with equal rights with man. Social differences ought only to be based on common advantage."

[1] *Trois Femmes de la Révolution*, L. Lacour, Paris, 1900.

Prophecy lurked in her tenth article:

"Woman has the right to mount the scaffold; she must also have a similar right to mount the platform of the orator."

Two years later she exceeded the bounds of Robespierre's patience, and he sent her to the guillotine. She promptly pleaded that she was about to become a mother, in the phrase:

"My enemies will not see my blood flow, for I am about to give the Republic a citizen."

It was found to be a lie invented from fear of death. On the scaffold she denied that she was a daughter of Louis XV, and condemned her own "fatal desire for fame. I wanted to become some one." The falling axe formed the bourne of her destiny.

How far it was imagined women would attain may be gathered from *An Address to the Fair Sex about the Present Revolution*,[1] in which it was stated that they alone would derive benefit from the movement because differences of birth and money must disappear and girls be free to dispose of their hands and property. The rich could then marry girls without dowers, and women, being obliged to undertake new duties, must display more firmness of judgment. No novels must they read except *Télémaque*, and no more must they be led by monks and priests.

Here again the Revolution as affecting women was brought back to the emancipation from the clergy, which had been preached by the Encyclopædists. This is far from what is known as complete emancipation; but even political power was not personally

[1] Published at Orleans in 1790. See *Les Femmes d'Orléans*, by C. Bloch.

coveted by Madame Roland.[1] She is a crystalline figure, this lady of Lyons, coming to Paris as the wife of the elderly deputy, she herself being thirty-eight, with lovely black hair flowing down to her waist, and soft proud eyes. Joy that merged into peace was her characteristic, with an unwonted lack of self-consciousness. Her favourite reading was Plutarch, her favourite philosopher her own husband. She became the centre of the Girondists, but herself played no part. Quoting from her letters:

> "I was present at these meetings, but I knew right well what was becoming to my sex, and never departed from it. I sat outside the circle, either occupied with needlework or writing whilst they consulted."

And Etienne Dumont states:

> "I have seen several ministers and Girondist leaders at her house. A woman seems a little out of place there. But she did not take part in the discussion, she usually remained at her writing-table, writing letters, and generally seemed occupied with other things, although she lost no word."

What her writing could be we are able to judge by the famous letter to the King, which purported to be by her husband:

> "The Revolution is made in the soul; it will be accomplished at the cost of blood and will be cemented with blood, if wisdom does not prevent calamities it is still possible to avoid."[2]

[1] *Die Tochter Und Die Gemahlin Eines Minister Des Révolution*, by Schlosser in *Archiv. und Gesch. von Literatur*, Frankfurt, 1880.

[2] *Mémoires*, Madame Roland, Paris, vol. ii., p. 115.

Her own time came, and she faced it with the composure of a brave woman. Of her demeanour there is this testimony:

> "Something more than is usually found in the looks of women painted itself in those large black eyes of hers, full of expression and sweetness. She spoke to me often at the grate; we were all attentive around her in a sort of admiration and astonishment; she expressed herself with a purity, with a harmony and a rhythm that made her language like music, of which the ear could never have enough. Her conversation was serious, not cold; coming from the mouth of a beautiful woman, it was frank and courageous as that of a great man."[1]

At the foot of the scaffold she asked for pen and paper to write the strange thoughts that were rising in her.[2] On this being refused she looked at the statue of Liberty and exclaimed, "Oh, Liberty, what things are done in thy name!" after which she insisted on being executed before Lamarche to give him courage. In her last letter she said her husband would not survive her; he committed suicide the day after he heard of her death, by running a sword-stick through his heart.

Madame Roland had been incarcerated in the cell once occupied by Charlotte Corday, the Judith of French history—an animated, decided, self-sacrificing, patriotic girl. She was the daughter of a man of high lineage, belonging to one of the oldest families in Normandy. On her mother's premature death she undertook in mere childhood the household management, her charm to others being contrasted with the

[1] *Sur les Prisons*, by Riouffe, vol. i., p. 55.
[2] Introduction to her *Mémoires*, vol. i., p. 68.

Neurdein

MADAME ROLAND

FROM A PAINTING BY HEINSIUS AT VERSAILLES

severity of treatment she always manifested to herself.[1] Having at fourteen, entered a convent at Caen, she remained there eight years, until its abolition by the Convention. Then she returned to her father, a man of high principles and broad, tolerant views.

She had become a serious young woman, much occupied with reading, her favourite authors being Rousseau and Raynal. The latter—an unfrocked Jesuit—had composed a Philosophic History to which Grimm and Diderot had contributed. Some of his historical works came into the hands of Napoleon as a boy. Charlotte Corday found relaxation in drawing and in music. She was intensely imbued with the pseudo-classicism then current. Examples of Republican virtue in ancient history formed her standard, beneath which contemporary humanity in her esteem fell far short. This in no way deterred her from ardent interest in current affairs, and her view of the promiscuous employment of the guillotine was:

> "They have killed all those who would have given us freedom; they are executioners, nothing else."

Her charitable efforts on behalf of the poor in the vicinity of her home brought her in contact with Barbaroux, the local Deputy,[2] and through him with the Girondists. From them she obtained the idea that Marat was the one national danger. "This wild beast who would devour France with the fire of civil war" had to be removed. Of course no one man at that time stood for so much as this maiden in her country home imagined. Her dream was to kill Marat

[1] *Charlotte Corday*, by R. Focke, Leipzig, 1895.
[2] *Mémoires*, by Meillan, Paris, p. 75.

at the summit of the Mountain in the Convention, with this appeal to the people in her pocket:

> "My Fatherland! your misfortunes break my heart. I can offer you nothing but life, and I thank Heaven for the liberty which allows me to give it. I wish my last breath to benefit my fellow-citizens, that my head, carried round Paris, shall be the sign of unity to all friends of law, and that the just world shall declare that I was of use to mankind."

It is evident that she left home prepared to die, and in her stern self-discipline the personal sacrifice never disturbed her. On arriving in Paris, she slept all that afternoon and throughout the night.

Marat, being ill, could receive her only in his house, and this he did not do until her second visit, after she had sent him a note stating she was from Caen, the seat of the rebellion, and "will put it in your power to do France a great service." He received her in his bath, with Simonne Everard—who, in his own phrase, he had "married in the sight of Heaven"—hovering near. She told him of a plot, and when he questioned her, named some Deputies.

> "Their heads shall fall within a fortnight,"[1] he exclaimed, turning in his bath to write down their names.

She stabbed him to the heart with one thrust of a large knife she had bought in the Palais Royal.

"Help, dear!" cried Marat to Simonne, and died.

Having entrenched herself behind some furniture until the arrival of the authorities, Charlotte Corday calmly surrendered. In prison she asked that her

[1] *Histoire Parliamentaire*, vol xxviii., p. 301.

portrait should be painted, which was done. In a letter she wrote:

"For two days I have been rejoicing with the most beautiful happiness of peace. The happiness of my country is mine. I have hated only one person, and I have shown with what intensity; but there are thousands I have loved more than I have hated him. To-morrow at eight I shall be judged. I shall have lived until now in order to speak the language of the Romans. Otherwise I do not know what the end will be like, and the end crowns the work. There is no need for me to feign indifference to my fate, for up to this moment I have not the least fear of death. I never valued life except as an opportunity of serving others."

At her trial:

"All these details are needless; it is I who killed Marat."

"By whose instigation?" asked Tinville.

"By no one's. I killed one man to save a hundred thousand; a villain to save innocents, a savage wild beast to give my country repose. I was a Republican before the Revolution; I never wanted energy."[1]

She dated this: "The fourth day of the preparation of peace." That same evening, clad in a red dress as murderess, she was taken to execution in the Place de la Révolution. She declined priestly ministrations, and her calm smile was only disturbed by a blush when the assistants tore the handkerchief from her neck before the axe fell. The executioner struck the cheek of the severed head as he held it up, and was imprisoned by the police for the act.

[1] *Procès de Charlotte Corday*, *Hist. Parl.* xxviii. p. 321.

One other individual of very different calibre remains to be noticed. Historical investigation has demolished many of the legends connected with Théroigné de Méricourt. For example, she was never present at the storming of the Bastille. Marie Charpentier was in reality the woman who was given a pension for her energy on this occasion. When the women went in procession to Versailles—forcing respectable ones to go with the mob under the threat that otherwise their hair would be cut off—it was Reine Audu who was the ringleader. Théroigné herself—*galante mais non depravée*—was, however, a demagogue leader of such note that when she went to the Club of the Cordeliers, it was said that the Queen of Sheba had come to visit the Solomons of the district. Clad as an Amazon, with a Henry IV hat and a big plume set in it on her head, pistols in her belt and sword at her side, *la belle Liegoise* strutted about, a brazen recruiting officer, who ever wanted women to become Officers of Peace and Fraternity. In Belgium she was taken prisoner by the Austrians and conveyed to Vienna, where the Emperor Leopold had a conversation with her and released her. Back in Paris before the storming of the Tuileries, she was once seized by a party of Jacobins and publicly whipped, which helped to render her insane. To what extent lunacy eventually affected her brain may be gathered from the fact that a doctor has recorded that iced water was poured on her naked body without her evincing any sign of feeling.

The degradation of the worst women was shown by their conduct in the galleries during the trial of the King, and in their lust for blood around the guillotine. Others of more intellectual bent had

joined the fraternal societies[1] to study law and to debate on the rights of man. All class denominations were of course here discarded. Circles widely differing from these were formed in the provinces by women who had exchanged the thrall of the Church for active energy on behalf of their country, and many of the sex were decorated with medals on account of services rendered to the Republic.

When religion was abolished from a distorted sense of patriotism[2] and the Worship of the Supreme Being set up, women were chosen as Goddesses of Freedom. It is a popular error to suppose these were of immoral character. In the majority of cases they were honourable women chosen for their character rather than their beauty. In many districts girls from the best families were selected. Drawn by twelve horses, seated on a triumphal car, they wore the cap of liberty and distributed wreaths of leaves. One of the leading opera singers, Mademoiselle Maillard, presided over a Feast of Freedom held in the Church of Nôtre Dame, which was then called a Temple of Reason.

This girl amused herself, as did so many others, by going about in male attire. Once, noticing an officer annoying a woman, she insulted him, and on the morrow fought a duel and severely wounded him. Soon after, women in men's clothes perambulated Paris, trying to force their sisters to adopt the same guise, and the discussion caused a serious tumult. The Committee of Public Safety thereupon decided that women should take no part in government, and closed all clubs in which the sex showed political tendencies.

The vogue with women now took another turn.

[1] *La Féminisme Pendant la Révolution*, by A. Aulard, *Revue Bleue*, March 19, 1896.

[2] *Le Culte de la Raison et le Culte de l'Être Suprême*, A. Aulard, Paris, 1892.

They collaborated with the dandies in fantastic follies. *Les Merveilleuses* wandered about in transparent, indecent attire, or adopted outrageous Roman costume with rings on their bare sandalled feet. The climax came when a man wearing merely a loin-cloth walked through the streets of Paris between two women without a shred of clothing. This was too much for the mob, and they had to fly for their lives. Madame Tallien, a Spaniard by birth, was one of those who exulted in the unbridled extravagance of freedom that followed the Reign of Terror. She was, however, the first to reopen a *salon*, and thus headed the inevitable spirit of reaction.

The woman-soldier was another creation of the period.[1] At least fifty such are recorded—mostly girls—who actually took their share in active warfare. One was only sixteen. The best known are Felicity and Theophila Fernig, daughters of an official on the Belgian frontier. Attired in male clothing they joined in the resistance of the peasants against the Austrians, and by permission of Dumouriez entered the army, being subsequently taken prisoners. After they were released they again fought at Jemappes, and their good name was as much vaunted as their beauty. Most of the more middle-aged Amazons preferred to enter the cavalry, and many received pensions on account of wounds or for heroic conduct. When it was found that other women besides combatants were in the camp, disorganizing discipline, all except *vivandières* and washerwomen were forbidden. To-day the intrepid valour of martial citizenesses forms a comparatively forgotten page in the strange history of those distraught but pregnant times.

[1] *Les Femmes Soldats de la Révolution*, by Gerhaur. *La Revue Française*, July, 1904.

ENGLISH WOMEN OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

TO turn to the English woman of the eighteenth century after contemplating her French sister of the same period is like eating a penny bun after enjoying a delicate *éclair*. The one was provincially insular and narrow-minded, whereas the other was delicious, vivacious, and almost too broad in her views. To every self-respecting, fox-hunting, hard-drinking Englishman—and also to the austere Quaker and unredeemably horizon-limited shopkeeper — the Continent was the devil's stock-pot, and though he allowed his women folk to ape, and vulgarize, French fashions, he otherwise thanked God they were not like those other women—which most decidedly they were not. Beautiful truly, talkative occasionally, but never saying what was terse or memorable, the Englishwomen of the eighteenth century were plebeianly respectable, and possessed a dullness which was insular if aristocratic. There were sweet, winsome and clever women, of course, but they were afforded slender opportunities amid such surroundings and repressive up-bringing. Nor did public opinion approve of social emancipation. It was good form to protest against the mere insinuation of being a bluestocking, and a woman's worst foes were the censorious prudes of her own sex.

The nation suffered profound loss through the Court

not being representative, or of paramount importance. This loss reflected with much severity on the female sex, which gives the tone to all society. If the standard set in the highest circles is obviously dull and also is censorious when it is not coarse, the example must radiate through every social set in the realm. The monarchy of the Hanoverian dynasty was a foreign importation, tolerated for utilitarian purposes, but neither venerated nor admired. The first two Georges were Germans, who loathed England and used it for Hanoverian purposes. They imported German wives and German mistresses, all as fat, as dull, and as soulless as can be found anywhere in history. To quarry in the mud-heap of their doings would serve no purpose.

George III, educated in England, accorded well with the bucolic middle-class taste. Had that pleasant, youthful romance with Lady Sarah Lennox not been nipped in the bud, he might have grown less obstinate and less obtuse. His clever mother, Augusta of Saxe-Coburg, arranged his marriage with Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, a woman of overpowering mediocrity, soon blessed with a quiverful of children who agreed only to disagree. In the respectable stupidity of that methodical Court at Windsor, Fanny Burney at least learnt one lesson in economy, for the Queen told Mrs. Delany:

> "I picked that book up on a stall. Oh! it is amazing what good books there are on stalls. Oh! I don't pick them up myself. But I have a servant, very clever, and if they are not to be had at the booksellers, they are not for me more than another."

If this was the way the greatest lady in the land en-

couraged literature, it was only the toadyism of Dr. Johnson which was likely to reverence the ignorance of King George. Small wonder that those who were in some degree cosmopolitans gave the Court a cold shoulder, or else—like Lord Hervey—clung to it out of a chivalric but bored emotion. Macaulay wrote an eloquent diatribe upon Miss Burney having become a maid of honour when she was the most popular writer of fictitious narrative in English, and observes that she might now and then console herself for the loss of Burke and Windham's society by joining in the celestial colloquy of His Majesty's equerries. As a picture of the mode of existence, the following passage must be quoted:

"The history of an ordinary day was this. Miss Burney had to rise and dress herself early, that she might be ready to answer the royal bell which rang at half-past seven. Till about eight she attended in the Queen's dressing-room, and had the honour of lacing her august mistress's stays and putting on the hoop, gown, and neckerchief. The morning was chiefly spent in rummaging drawers and laying fine clothes in their proper places. Then the Queen was to be powdered and dressed for the day. Twice a week her Majesty's hair was curled and craped; and this operation appears to have added a full hour to the business of the toilette. It was generally three before Miss Burney was at liberty. At five she had to attend her colleague, Madame Schwellenberg, a hateful old toad-eater, as illiterate as a chambermaid, as proud as a whole German Chapter, rude, peevish, unable to bear solitude, unable to conduct herself with common decency in society. With this delightful associate Frances Burney had to dine and pass the evening. All her

scanty stock of broken English was employed to express the contempt with which she regarded the author of *Evelina* and *Cecilia*. Between eleven and twelve the bell rang, and Miss Burney had to pass twenty minutes or half an hour in undressing the Queen."[1]

Such was the daily routine of the writer that Burke was calling the first woman of her age. Mrs. Delany has testified:

"Miss Burney's novels, excellent as they are, are her meanest praise. Her admirable understanding, tender affections, and sweetness of manners make her invaluable to those who have the happiness to know her."[2]

This praise from a fastidious judge of female manners and morals in her eighty-sixth year, of a famous writer aged thirty-three, is a significant testimony. Miss Burney was the daughter of Dr. Charles Burney, a fashionable music master. By disposition she was shy and silent; her best novels were written when her knowledge of books was astonishingly small, and she does not appear to have been even a student of fiction. Johnson, Garrick, Gibbon, Burke, Reynolds and Sheridan were all intimates in the little drawing-room "crowded with peers, peeresses, ministers and ambassadors," and the study of humanity was her real occupation.

In that truly British spirit of horror of anything intellectual—to be noted to-day when most ladies prefer the society of brainless sportsmen to that of more

[1] *Madame D'Arblay*, by Lord Macaulay, *Edinburgh Review*, January, 1843

[2] *Autobiography and Correspondence*, Mrs. Delany.

MISS BURNEY
(MADAME D'ARBLAY)
FROM A PORTRAIT BY EDWARD BURNEY

intellectual men—the second Mrs. Burney severely lectured her stepdaughter when she evinced a disposition to write, and instead encouraged her to hem and stitch.[1] Eventually she published *Evelina* anonymously, of which the success was enormous. Dr. Johnson was especially approbatory, and it was at Mrs. Thrale's house at Streatham, where he was residing, that Miss Burney received the warmest eulogies. *Cecilia*, on its publication, was more impatiently awaited than any novel by Sir Walter Scott or Charles Dickens. Yet the author was immolated at Court as has been described, and became so absorbed in Court traditions that in her diary she could write: "Good heavens! What an insult! How indignant we all feel here no one can say," when the House of Commons presumed to inquire if the King was mad or not.

At last, released from her royal bondage, she married M. D'Arblay, listened with rapture to Madame de Staël and to Talleyrand, wrote a third novel, *Camilla*, for which she is said to have received the then record sum of three thousand guineas, became a devoted mother, lived until 1840, and remains an English immortal—chiefly owing to her success in depicting character with humour.

She is the latest figure among eighteenth-century Englishwomen—though, indeed, her origin was Irish, a fact to which she may have owed her gift of humour. Among the earlier was the grim one of Sarah Jennings, Duchess of Marlborough. She had won the devotion of her mistress Queen Anne,[2] and the silly intimacy of the two under the names of Mrs. Morley and Mrs. Freeman was as great as their subsequent enmity.

[1] *The House in St. Martin's Street*, by Constance Hill, London, 1906.

[2] "Who, when in good humour, was meekly stupid, and when in bad humour was sulkily stupid" (Lord Macaulay in his *History*).

There is of course no historical foundation for the spilling of that mythical glass of water which Voltaire declared "changed the fate of all Europe." In her youth her expressive, charming features and profusion of fine hair had won the heart of the gallant Churchill, and to the end her influence over him was unbounded. It is impossible, in anything she ever did, wrote, or said, to discover any indication of superior understanding. Yet the hero who could win Blenheim and Ramillies whilst cajoling those petty foreign allies was inspired by her, wrote her letters of adulation when the issues of kingdoms hung on his attention, and to his own avarice added her greed for possessions, of which Blenheim Palace is one standing memorial. Sarah inspired Marlborough just as Lady Hamilton inspired Nelson, but personally she inspires no admiration. Her violent lampoons against the Queen and the Tory administration were in execrable taste even in that tasteless age. It is true that when she was a widow at the age of sixty-two Lord Coningsby and the Duke of Somerset vainly sought her hand—probably because her wealth was enormous. Her career closed with the composition of her virulent Vindication of herself and of her husband. Moral amid immorality in youth, she was vindictive in an epoch when the venom of Pope only dignified by its talent the coarser slanders of inferior Grub Street. As a shrieking sister uttering diatribes, the Duchess of Marlborough was as dishonourably abusive as any of them, being blind to the obvious fact that the origin of whatever annoyances she suffered arose from her own villainous temper.

Between this Duchess and Madame D'Arblay lay that dreary eighteenth century in England, in which woman had no career open to her except to marry.

LADY HAMILTON

FROM A SKETCH BY GEORGE ROMNEY

The whole moral education of the sex was towards grovelling self-sacrifice. At the worst a woman might rail, scold, or grumble, but she always had to practise self-immolation. Public opinion insisted on that, and the prevalent sentimentality only encouraged it. Whilst it is the fashion to hold up the maternal virtues of the eighteenth century to the more occupied woman of to-day, it may be hinted that that a so-called model mother boarded out her own children until they had outgrown the most troublesome period of infancy.[1] Under the mother's eye the education and training of a girl was completely subordinated to the tastes and demands of men; the ideal was to be commonplace. For instance, the sister of Sir Joshua Reynolds, in an essay on Taste, much admired by Dr. Johnson, said:—

> "The love of praise in a female breast should never transcend the domestic sphere; perhaps the most perfect feminine mind habitually aims at nothing higher than exemption from blame."

This coincides with Lord Lyttleton's "Advice to a Lady":—

> Seek to be good, but aim not to be great,
> A woman's noblest station is retreat;
> Her fairest virtues fly from public sight,
> Domestic worth, *that* shuns too strong a light.

Lady Pennington, in a manual of advice to young ladies—how they broke those pretty empty heads with volumes of platitudinous admonitions!—observed:—

> "A sensible woman will soon be convinced that all the learning the utmost application can make her master of, will be, in many points, inferior to

[1] *Side-Lights on the Georgian Period*, by George Paston, London, 1902, p. 80.

that of a schoolboy. This reflection will keep her always humble, and will be a check to that loquacity which renders some women such insupportable companions."

The result is seen in one of the *Letters of Lord Chesterfield to His Son*:—

"Women have an entertaining tattle, sometimes wit; but for solid reasoning good sense, I never in my life knew one who had it, or who reasoned or acted consequentially for twenty-four hours together. A man of sense only trifles with them, plays with them, humours and flatters them as he does a sprightly forward child, but he neither consults them about nor trusts them with serious matters, though he often makes them believe he does both; for they love mightily to be dabbling in business which they always spoil, and being distrustful that men in general look upon them in a trifling light, they almost adore that man who talks to them seriously and seems to consult them. No flattery is too high or too low for them. They will greedily swallow the highest, and gratefully accept the lowest, and you may safely flatter any woman from her understanding down to her fan."

After this one feels positively grateful that Dr. Johnson "declared that a man of sense should meet a suitable companion in a wife. It was a miserable thing when the conversation could only be such as, whether the mutton should be boiled or roasted, and a probable dispute about that." The only Georgian who took woman seriously was the middle-class Richardson, and he made Clarissa merely a self-suffer-

ing individual, who could swoon, dissolve into tears, protest, and be deceived at the slightest opportunity.

In a period when women virtually administered to men it was not astonishing that there was keen appreciation of feminine beauty. The story of the Gunnings, as their latest biographer observes,[1] is more like a fairy-tale than an episode in real life. They were Cornish by birth, and not Irish, as is generally supposed. However, they were brought up in Ireland in most impecunious fashion, but when they came to London it is no exaggeration to say that never were women so universally admired, although their manners at this time were childishly brusque and unrefined. Their mother was match-making. She meant Elizabeth to marry the Duke of Hamilton. For a while he was difficult to secure. One evening he proposed and insisted that the marriage should be solemnized at once. At midnight in Mayfair Chapel a clergyman gabbled the service, and as no wedding-ring was handy, one was cut off a bed-curtain. In three weeks her sister Maria was united to Lord Coventry.

> "At Court people clambered on chairs and tables to catch a glimpse of their triumphant loveliness; outside St. James's Palace they were mobbed by an admiring crowd, and in country towns through which the Duchess of Hamilton passed people sat up all night to see her."[2]

Lady Coventry was extremely silly. In Paris her clumsiness amused the Court, and she once declined to go to a reception given by Madame de Pompadour because her music lesson was at that hour. She told George II that the only sight she would like to see

[1] *Famous Beauties of Two Reigns*, by Mary Craven, London, 1906, p. 111. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 115.

was a coronation, but when she complained of being mobbed in the Park, the astonished crowd on the following Sunday saw her parading amid an escort of fourteen Yeomen of the Guard. Her husband at first forbade her to use cosmetics—an injunction which made her ridiculous in Paris—but after she violated this, some preparation of white lead induced consumption. The Duchess of Hamilton enjoyed a brief but unhappy alliance. She then became Duchess of Argyll, and in the end was mother of four dukes and wife of two. Of her proud but benevolent disposition many anecdotes are told, and Emma Hamilton owed her socially assured position to her influential kindness.

The "beautiful Duchess of Devonshire" was intensely human and impetuous as well as lovely. By birth a daughter of Lord Spencer, she was a great-granddaughter of Sarah Jennings. Her teeth and her complexion appear to have been equally dazzling, her magnificent hair was chestnut in hue, and her vitality and exquisite expression added vivacity to her looks. Even for an Englishwoman she appears to have walked badly, but she soon set the town agape with her daring combinations of style and colour in dress, and was apparently the first to cast aside the hoop. Her extravagance led her to incur debts which were increased by her gaming propensities. Then she took the side of Fox, canvassed for him, and on one occasion gave a butcher a kiss for his vote. She became the political opponent of the Duchess of Gordon, but after the death of Fox, to whom she was tenderly attached, her health gave way, and when dying of consumption she faintly begged the forgiveness of her husband, who was himself enamoured, as she knew, with Lady Elizabeth Foster, who was present at Fox's death-bed at Chatsworth.

MRS. SIDDONS

FROM THE PAINTING BY THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY

Throughout this work the stage has been barely mentioned, because the dramatic art is one which, though suited to women, is not really of historic importance. But in the eighteenth century certain tragedy and comedy queens strutted their brief hour and were of some account, although respectability tried to be shocked even in the most virtuous cases. Peg Woffington must have possessed charming individuality. The beautiful Miss Farren became Countess of Derby, and well merited her position. There was a most notable family of Kembles, for on the feminine side alone posterity is familiar with the names of Sarah Siddons in one generation and of Fanny Kemble and Adelaide Sartoris in a later one. Of Mrs. Siddons, Dr. Johnson, in a letter to Mrs. Thrale, wrote :[1]

> "Mrs. Siddons, in her visit to me, behaved with great modesty and propriety, and left nothing behind her to be censured or despised. Neither praise nor money, the two powerful corrupters of mankind, seem to have depraved her."

On her entry, as there happened to be no chair for her, Dr. Johnson said with a smile :

> "Madam, you who so often occasion a want of seats to other people will the more easily excuse the want of one yourself."

It is recorded that they both agreed that Queen Katharine in *Henry VIII* was the most natural character conceived by Shakespeare, and Dr. Johnson took the opportunity to tell her that "Mrs. Porter, in the vehemence of rage, and Mrs. Clive, in the spright-

[1] Dated October 27, 1783.

liness of humour, I have never seen surpassed." Tradition relates that Mrs. Siddons carried her tragic theatrical manner into real life without any sense of incongruity.

Few more pathetic romances flit across the pages of history than that of Perdita. Romantically beautiful, a young Irish girl induced Garrick to allow her to go on the stage, and almost immediately made a surreptitious marriage with an adventurer named Robinson. Mary Robinson became the rage, but her misadventures through her husband were many until she became the leading lady at Drury Lane at the age of eighteen. In a command performance of *A Winter's Tale* she bewitched the young affections of the future George IV. "Florizel to Perdita" was the address of the daily missive. "Unalterable to my Perdita through life" was inscribed in a miniature he gave her. Romantic meetings by moonlight at Kew, where the Prince was being strictly educated, led to her abandonment of the stage. Later the lovers appeared together in a carriage which had cost nine hundred guineas; Perdita was radiant, and then, without warning, received a letter, "we must meet no more." She was the earliest among the many who found that the first gentleman in Europe was the vilest blackguard in Christendom. London being intolerable, Parisian society opened its arms to her, the Duke of Orleans giving elaborate entertainments in her honour and Marie Antoinette selecting her for special notice. Then came rheumatic fever, caught by impulsively driving in the rain to help a friend. After years of chronic invalidism she died within sight of Windsor Castle at Englefield Green, her dire poverty being cheered by the devoted affection of her only daughter.

Another and far more mysterious romance is that of Dean Swift with Stella and Vanessa. He was an embodied human tragedy, and he brought the lives of two singularly sweet and trustful girls to complete ruin. How far the mental malady, which clouded his life and found a reflection in his strange and strenuous writings, was accountable for his conduct it is not possible to say. Esther Johnson, known as Stella, was a child in candour and character when by age she was a woman. "One of the most beautiful, graceful, and agreeable young women. Her hair was of raven black; her eyes sparkling; and her mien one of thrilled animation."[1] Swift won her heart with that strange conjunction of tyranny and petting by which he subjugated women. To this day it is unknown whether they were privately married by the Bishop of Clogher.[2] One fact is certain; that she made her will years after as a spinster and in her own maiden name; moreover, they lived apart.

Dean Swift also came under the influence of Esther Vanhomrigh, known as Vanessa, daughter of the widow of a Dutch merchant. Stella appears to have been surprised at their friendship, which never ruffled the depth of her deep love for her hero. Vanessa seems to have made what is commonly called a dead set at him. She flattered his weaknesses and for his sake became a politician, "whereas I never knew if you were Whigs or Tories," wrote Swift in his *Journal to Stella*. "Live for the good that the present moment can give," was Vanessa's word to him: "the love I bear you is not seated only in my soul; there is not a single atom of my brain that is not blended with it.

[1] *Swift*, by Sir Henry Craik, London, 1892, 2 vols., vol. i., p. 79.

[2] Orrery and Delany both say so, and Sir Henry Craik confesses himself convinced. He says the ceremony was solemnized in a garden.

Were I an enthusiast, you would be the deity I should worship." Small wonder that such observations affected the unsteady reason of the great cynic.

They met occasionally, those two antagonistic women, who will never be disunited in the memory of posterity. Finally, Vanessa could bear the mystery no longer and wrote to ask Stella if she was married to Swift. Stella avowed the union, and sent the letter to the Dean, who rode at once to Marley Abbey, where Vanessa was then residing, threw an envelope containing her letter into her lap, strode silently out of the room and saw her no more. Vanessa only survived a few weeks.[1]

Stella had been moulded by the Dean, and her devotion was never rewarded, despite her long and patient waiting. She did not attempt to justify herself to her contemporaries. When on her death-bed, Swift declared: "I cannot come to see her die"; but once he was at her side, and then she asked him to say she was his wife, on which he turned round on his heel and never spoke to her again.[2] Remorse perhaps mingled with his grief for her. Eventually they lay in the same grave. In Swift's desk was found a tress of Stella's, and to it was attached these words: "Only a woman's hair." Every commentary can be made on this immortal phrase. No one can tell how Swift himself meant it.

Vastly different from Stella was "the Madame du Deffand of the English capital,"[3] Elizabeth Montagu, whose supremacy as a hostess was acknowledged even though her affectation of information was severely ridiculed. "She diffuses more knowledge than any woman I know, or indeed almost any man," was, how-

[1] *Observations*, Delany, London, 1754, p. 58.
[2] *Swift*, by T. Sheridan, Dublin, 1784. [3] Wraxall.

ever, Dr. Johnson's testimony. So precocious had been her childish proclivities that before the age of eight she had copied out all the *Spectator*. Her nickname as a girl was "Fidget."[1] She ultimately became the first "blue-stocking," and was widely sought, perhaps for the reason she gave to Garrick why her parties were successful: "I never invite idiots to my house."[2] She must have modified this resolution in 1791, when King George, Queen Caroline, and seven hundred guests accepted her hospitality at a breakfast. Her mansion, designed by Stuart and Bonomi, built by Adams, and decorated by Angelica, Zucchi, and Cipriani, was magnificent. Oddly enough, Horace Walpole observes "there was not a morsel of gilding," whereas its gilded walls and ceilings were the talk of the town. Each May-Day Mrs. Montagu entertained the chimney-sweeps of London to roast beef and plum-pudding. Her great friend was another "blue-stocking," Elizabeth Carter. They were known as Mind and Matter. Of her, too, Dr. Johnson has something to say: "A man is in general better pleased when he has a good dinner on his table than when his wife talks Greek. My old friend, Mrs. Carter, could make a pudding as well as translate Epictetus from the Greek, and work a handkerchief as well as compose a poem." Yet her father often gave up teaching her as a girl, owing to her stupidity. Her pertinacious industry, however, conquered, though she incurred lifelong headaches by undue use of snuff and by chewing green tea, both for the purpose of keeping awake to study. Solidity rather than brilliance characterised her mental capacities.

[1] Fond of dancing and restless, "handsome, fat, and merry." *Autobiography*, Delany, vol. ii., p. 95.

[2] *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, 9 Rep., Pt. II, p. 480.

Far more notable was Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, daughter of Lord Kingston, one of the bluestockings who have forced themselves on the attention of contemporaries and posterity. "By the help of an uncommon memory and indefatigable labour," she taught herself Latin, being left to "the care of an old governess who, though perfectly good and pious, wanted capacity." At eight her father made her the toast of the Kit-Cat Club, and as none of the other members had seen her, she was brought in and made a member. She married by preference a man considerably older than herself, to whom she remained sincerely attached. Her wedding had been by elopement, and eventually they went to Constantinople, where he was ambassador. The unfortunate episode of her life was her friendship for Pope, who blackened her after their quarrel. That she incurred the enmity of Horace Walpole is not surprising. He gives a disgusting account of her slovenly appearance, impudence, avarice, and absurdity.[1] In middle age, when a leader of fashion, she left her husband in order to reside on the Continent, which she did for more than twenty years. Writing to her daughter towards the close of that period, she observes:

> "My life is so near a conclusion that where or how I pass it, if innocently, is almost become indifferent to me. I have outlived the greater part of my acquaintance, and, to say the truth, a return to crowd and bustle after my long retirement would be disagreeable to me. Yet, if I could be of use either to your father or your family, I would

[1] *Letters of Horace Walpole*, ed. by Cunningham, London, 1857, vol. i., p. 55.

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU

FROM THE PORTRAIT BY JONATHAN RICHARDSON

venture shortening the insignificant days of your affectionate mother."[1]

She returned in her seventieth year, so soon as she became a widow. Among her merits may be mentioned a great regard for Fielding, above all for *Tom Jones*, and in her copy she wrote "*Ne plus ultra.*"[2] Her severe taste, one marked by sense rather than tenderness, made Richardson intolerable to her. Certainly she warmly appreciated her own penmanship, judging from the remark, "Keep my letters, they will be as good as Madame de Sévigné's forty years hence." This is her account of a visit to the Sultana:

"I went to see the Sultana Haften, favourite of the late Emperor Mustapha, who you know (or perhaps you don't know) was deposed by his brother, the reigning Sultan Achmet, and died a few weeks after, being poisoned as it was generally believed. This lady was, immediately after his death, saluted with an absolute order to leave the seraglio and choose herself a husband among the great men of the Porte. I suppose you may imagine her overjoyed at this proposal. Quite the contrary: these women, who are called and esteem themselves queens, look upon this liberty as the greatest disgrace and affront that can happen to them. She threw herself at the Sultan's feet and begged him to poignard her, rather than use his brother's widow with that contempt. She represented to him, in agonies of sorrow, that she was privileged from this misfortune by having brought five princes into the Ottoman family; but all the

[1] *Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. by Moy Thomas, London, 1887, vol. i., p. lxvii.

[2] Introductory Anecdotes, *Ibid.*, p. cxxv.

boys being dead, this excuse was not received. She chose Bekir Effendi, then Secretary of State and above fourscore years old, to convince the world that she firmly intended to keep the vow she had made, of never suffering a second husband to approach her bed. She has no black eunuchs for guard, her husband being obliged to respect her as a queen and not inquire at all what is done in her apartment, where I was led into a large room, with a sofa the whole length of it covered with pale blue figured velvet on a silver ground. She did not seem to me to have ever been so beautiful as the fair Fatima, but her dress was something so surprisingly rich—the whole must be worth above a hundred thousand pounds sterling.

"She gave me a dinner of fifty dishes of meat, which were placed on the table but one at a time, and was extremely tedious. . . . The Sultana seemed in very good humour and talked to me with the utmost civility. Sometimes the Sultan diverts himself in the company of all his ladies, who stand in a circle round him. But this seemed to me neither better nor worse than the circles at most Courts. . . . The Sultana is what one would naturally expect to find a Turkish lady, willing to oblige, but not knowing how to go about it, and it is easy to see in her manner that she has lived secluded from the world. . . . My letter is insensibly grown so long, I am ashamed of it. This is a very bad symptom. 'Tis well if I don't degenerate into a regular story-teller. It may be our proverb, that knowledge is no burthen, may be true as to oneself, but knowing too much is very apt to make us troublesome to other people."[1]

[1] Written to Countess of Mar at Pera in 1718. *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 218.

Could a greater contrast be found than the tolerant woman writing this picture of eastern life and Mary Wollstonecraft, "one of the forces that helped to mould the nineteenth century"?[1] Her views were towards human emancipation. In her *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, a crude, assertive book, she writes with honest fearlessness, striking original lines of thought on every subject. During the French Revolution, as marriage was impossible, she trusted herself to an American, who deserted her and her child. Then she met the middle-aged philosopher—and subsequent humbug—Godwin. He was very averse to marriage, and when it was eventually solemnized each retained their separate lodgings, continuing their literary work. A few days after the birth of the daughter who was to marry Shelley and write *Frankenstein*, the mother died. In that daughter's words:

> "Open as day to melting charity, with a heart brimful of generous affection, yearning for sympathy, her life had been one course of hardship, poverty, lonely struggle, and bitter disappointment."

The limitations of space in this work have regretfully compelled the author, among so many necessitated omissions to say nothing of women as artists. But one exception to this rule of silence must be made in the case of Angelica Kauffmann. To this pretty German painter, Sir Joshua Reynolds went down on his knees at Ranelagh. She spent her youth in England, where she was the fashion of the hour. Of her, Oppermann, the critic has written:

> "There have been few artists who remained as

[1] *Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, by Helen Moore, 1886, p. 23.

she did, so persistently true to her own nature. She was always tender, womanly, sympathetic, and although occasionally she erred on the side of exaggerated sentiment, she never offended against good taste. She leaves us a pleasant recollection of a sweet woman, who has in a certain degree influenced the development of art. Her memory will be always cherished, not only in her own country, but wherever art is reverenced."

Daughter of a painter, her father early resolved that she should be a prodigy. When she was a baby her plaything was a chalk pencil. Two years in Milan at a susceptible age unquestionably influenced her. Later, her brush was her passport everywhere. In London she was brought out by Lady Wentworth. She is mentioned in Sir Joshua Reynolds' note-books as "Miss Angel." It was said she was never happy unless several suitors were at her feet. Once at Drury Lane she found an arm of both Dance and Fuseli embracing her waist, and while her arms were folded in the front of the box she contrived to squeeze the hand of both.[1] She pandered to the contemporary mania for classical poses and dress in portrait painting, and her prudery found one expression in a note of explanation: "to avoid the *unnecessary* indelicacy of painting Truth *naked*, I have clothed her in white, as significant of Purity." At Dr. Burney's she met the adventurer who called himself Count Horn, and married him surreptitiously. A deed of separation was eventually signed, and then her life became hopelessly calm. Amid her success as a painter, her reverence for religious subjects may be cited from her note-book:

[1] So J. T. Smith ("Rainy Day Smith") in *Nollekens and his Times.*

"One day, when I found it impossible to convey to my canvas any idea of the majesty of Almighty God, I threw down my brush, saying, never again shall I attempt to interpret the Divine, which is impossible to human inspiration. I shall reserve the attempt for the time when I shall enjoy Heaven, supposing always that there should be such an art as painting there."[1]

Eventually she contracted a second marriage in middle age with Zucchi. Founded on esteem, it was peaceful, despite his morbid disposition. Middle age and later years were for the most part spent in Rome. She was wont to paint almost from dawn until light failed, and then by night held a *salon* to which Goethe came. "She herself is weary of painting for sale, but her old husband finds it profitable that she should do so."[2] She must have appealed strangely to the poet, considering she was forty-eight at the time when he wrote: "Now that I am leaving Rome, I feel that I could wish to bind myself by closer ties to this fascinating woman." Their subsequent correspondence reveals a warm friendship. How different might have been Goethe's after-life, if he could have married her—and, possibly, have resided in Rome!

[1] *Angelica Kauffmann*, by Frances Gerard, London, 1893, p. 149.
[2] *Italienische Reise*, Goethe, vol. ii.

WOMEN OF THE TIME OF THE FRENCH EMPIRE[1]

IT might have been thought that such a momentous historical upheaval as the French Revolution —in which women played so decisive a part—would have produced a new type, just as the United States has evolved that very specialized product which we at once recognize unmistakably as the American woman. Nothing of the kind, however, occurred. With the advent of Empire in France woman retrogressed, assuming a less commanding attitude beneath the domination of the dictatorial element. It needed the lapse of a generation before we are confronted by the new type personified by George Sand—the woman who is indifferent to even the outward simulation of respectability, which must apparently be the very sheet-anchor of her sex in civilization, more particularly when the real thing is lost. From this to de-feminization was but one further step; lying in a future unconceived in the period of the French Empire.

[1] It would be absurd for each statement to select authorities out of the multiplicity of works written upon the three women dealt with in this section. The standard English biography of Mme. Récamier is, of course, Alys Hallard's translation of E. Herriot's, London, 1906; and of Lady Hamilton, Walter Sichel's, London, 1905; both likely to be the final word for a long time to come. The adequate English biography of Mme. de Staël has still to be written. *Madame de Staël and Her Lovers*, by Francis Gribble, London, 1907, deals with the heroine from the view that the motives transfigure her conduct. She "meant well and felt good," a quotation which will sufficiently illustrate the method of the book.

That epoch shows three dissimilar and most remarkable women—two French and one English—Madame de Staël, Madame Récamier, and Lady Hamilton. The rest lapse into a variegated and interesting background.

As for Josephine, she was a Creole, with the characteristic virtues and vices of her breeding. Her languorous, attractive, and ill-mannered individuality achieved a wholly unmerited importance because Napoleon loved her. She never loved Napoleon; he was far too great ever to be loved by any woman. But he loved her madly, just as Nelson loved Emma Hamilton. So long as he loved Josephine, he was incited by his love for her to do those things that convulsed the world. From the time he discarded her, he encountered the misfortunes which began at Moscow and ended at St. Helena. So long as he idealized that unfaithful Creole, what he imagined her to be urged him to achieve heroic deeds. Thus far Josephine made history. Personally, she trails through the Court distracting Napoleon from his councils to settle the quarrels of her sisters. Self-satisfied and vulgar, but a little self-conscious, Josephine is one of the active forces of history, for she is a passive agent in the momentous issues created by the fascination she inspired in the heart of Bonaparte.

Born in 1766, and dying two years after Waterloo, Madame de Staël is the great feminine figure of her time. Situated as she was—at the death of one vast historical epoch and at the conception of the new modern one—she retained something of the old and gave forth much of the new. In literature and in history critics unite in ascribing to her more of the genius than of the artist. She was the witness of most of the episodes of her times, and in herself personifies

the impulsive healthiness that characterises them. Both her parents were remarkable. Of Irish origin, but acclimatized in Germany, M. Necker, the renowned banker, was brought up in Geneva, and first came to Paris as Minister for that Republic to the Court at Versailles. There must have been something remarkable about the apparently artless Suzanne Curchod, daughter of a Swiss pastor, because first she attracted the love of the eminent historian, Gibbon, and then she threw herself into the arms of the first financier of the day. The issue of that marriage was Germaine, the future Madame de Staël. Madame Necker, captivating and loyal to her husband, a coquette of unassailed purity, held the most catholic *salon* in Paris. Of the things recorded of her, the most charming is that she spent five days at the bedside of the dying Buffon in order to convert him to Christianity. Germaine, as a child, found herself idolized in the brilliant circle gathered at her mother's. That mother apparently resolved to exploit her precocity; her education was far too much forced. She was at her ease, at the age of eleven, in the conversation of adults. Not only did she transcribe and make annotations, but before she was fifteen the Abbé Raynal wanted her to write on the revocation of the edict of Nantes. Overstrain brought a nervous collapse, and when the doctors ordered cessation of study, her mother's interest in her at once ended. She regained health and vivacity in the country, and the father she worshipped came to her at St. Ouen, where she comforted him for his misfortunes.

She grew up a beauty of the fleshy school. Her features were not wonderful, but her black curls, her dark eyes, and her significant bust gave her the physical attractiveness she needed to assist her great

mental energy. Friends and foes alike confess she was totally lacking in grace; moreover, when talking —and she was never silent—her face was distorted by grimaces, whilst her voice was harsh and strident. There were three candidates for the hand of this great heiress: William Pitt, whom her mother wanted her to marry, but to whose suit she showed aversion; Prince George Augustus of Mecklenburg, who made no secret that he only courted her for her dower; and the extravagant Swede, Baron de Staël Holstein, who needed a fortune before he could become Ambassador in Paris.

When presented on her marriage, Mme. de Staël tore her flounce and so spoilt her third curtsey. This was as damnable at Court as a gorgeous vestment at the celebration is to a Low Church fanatic. But Mme. de Staël simply laughed. She was absorbed in her father's return to power, and when he was the first Protestant since Sully to become Director-General of Finance, her elation was by no means shared by him. He read the signs of the times and knew it was too late. "Every day he would do something good and prevent something bad," cried his daughter. His flight, and the subsequent events, she regarded from a position of one destitute of enthusiasm for monarchy or directory. But at the popular ovation when he was brought back, she fainted. Subsequently she laboured to effect the escape of the royal family, but the hatred of Marie Antoinette for Necker's daughter caused her efforts to be futile. Those days were the occasion for the display of feminine courage, and no one surpassed Mme. de Staël, who again and again risked her life to save those of friends. The climax came when she was arrested as she was leaving Paris, and sent to the

Hôtel de Ville under the custody of a gendarme amid a furious mob. For three hours they surrounded her yelling "death!" and then she was confronted by Robespierre. Manuel, Santerre, and Tallien assisted in her escape, which was nearly frustrated by her own temerity and lack of tact.

In safety at Coppet she wrote to her husband:

> "Switzerland inspires me with tremendous disgust. I think if I were in France I might be of use to numbers of individuals, and in that hope I would brave anything."

As a matter of fact she organized a series of volunteers into France, who would hand their return passports to those who had to be saved. She now first came to England and won the friendship of Miss Burney, only to forfeit it because the Englishwoman suspected the nature of her feelings for Count Louis de Narbonne. Miss Berry associates her affections with Talleyrand, and others have been also designated. Gibbon was her sole friend at Coppet, where she buried her mother and remained until after ninth Thermidor, when she rushed back to Paris to involve herself in endless political cabals. The feminine mania for interference in her became a positive fever, and she had to have a finger in every pie, for example, inducing Barras to nominate Talleyrand Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The crisis of her life was induced by Benjamin Constant. At once he realized she was "more than a talking machine." He was the only person who ever said she knew how to listen. It has been disputed whether he or she exerted the stronger influence over the other. In all probability they reacted on one another in different degrees at different times. Her

turbulence of ideas breathes more sincerity than could be inspired by his perverse originality. It was impossible she and Napoleon could be in sympathy. All the motives she extolled he regarded as sentimentalism. Probably her opulent figure, untidy attire, and vociferous irrepressibility irritated him, for he was accustomed to command and she was incapable of being suppressed. She glorified the individual; to him the individual was only the instrument. She has related that before meeting him at Berthier's she wrote out the different spirited replies she would make to him, but he disappointed her by only putting the most insignificant questions. She thought she could prevent him invading Switzerland, but he never replied to her arguments, only diverting the conversation to his own love of solitude—which was an affectation. Thenceforth she was in opposition to him. Once he asked why she would not give in her adhesion to his Government; what did she want?

"It is not what I want, but what I think," was her reply.

She inspired Constant's most bitter speech, only to find her *salon* deserted, as he had told her would be the case. Her retort was her work on *Literature*, which created an enormous sensation and brought all Paris again to her feet. Then, to curry favour with Napoleon, her novel *Delphine* was stigmatized as immoral, and when she next visited Coppet she received a hint to remain in Switzerland, where Constant soon joined her, without having any choice in the matter.

Here she first met Madame Récamier, and whilst Constant fell in love with the beautiful Juliet only after the Vienna Congress, Chateaubriand also caught his earliest glimpse of her in the rooms of

Madame de Staël. He did not meet her again for twelve years. How Madame Récamier and Ballanche were impressed by their hostess may be judged from this fragment:

> "Madame de Staël had received from Nature immense faculties and that prodigious activity which could make the best of them all. Her great mind took in the whole domain of human intelligence, and her ardent soul was such that it extended still further these boundaries. She was endowed with that ascendancy which rallies the ideas of others around its own ideas, and she had, besides this, that great power which stirs tranquil souls, which gives nourishment to restless minds, and which displaces the limits of accepted things. She could interest herself, at the same time, in that fermentation of ideas about the Infinite which was working in German minds, and in that something positive which wanted to establish itself in France. She had in her mind the whole future of Europe. Her ideas were veritable creations; her reveries even, when applied to literature and politics, were the essayings of a great and powerful imagination. A fresh poetry will no doubt be born from such depths of thought; the first accents of this poetry were heard by Madame de Staël."

After a while she again intruded into France, where she betrayed such excessive anxiety lest Napoleon should interfere with her that at length he complied with her fears. The self-imposed wanderings she has described in exaggerated expressions culminated in a visit with Constant to Germany. There she made the most of the Corsican's mild vindictiveness, and so enhanced her own fame. Against him her bias was

personal, and was feminine in its individuality; it played no small political part in fermenting Europe.

Schiller was bewildered by her exhausting personality, and complained that the devil had brought her to torment him in the middle of a new play, declaring he found her "the most gesticulative, combative and talkative" of women, who destroyed all the poetry in him. Goethe she found cold: "time has rendered him a spectator." With the Weimar Court she was as much pleased as they were bored with her. At Berlin she fell in with August Schlegel, who was poet and writer as well as thinker. He had the distinction of perceiving Indo-Germanic ideas before Niebuhr's great discovery of them.

Reduced to the verge of dementia by the death of her father, she soon found reaction in the group she gathered at Coppet: Muller and Schlegel arguing all day long, and Sismondi and Constant. The German Revival was being fortified in that Swiss retreat. Then with Schlegel and her children she went to Italy, learning from her companion to appreciate art, and gathering receptions and impressions of society in Rome. After her publication of *Corinne*, which embodied much of all this under the guise of fiction, Napoleon's malice grew more bitter. Then Constant married Charlotte von Hardenburg, and Madame de Staël again wandered into Germany. She asked Fichte to give her, in a quarter of an hour, a summary of his *Ego*. In consternation and bad French he attempted the impossible, but she cut him short with a witty parable which he never forgave.

Her work on Germany is one of the most remarkable ever written. To choose the hour of national abasement and to call the people to revolt, to cast in the teeth of the conquering Napoleon—whose

merits the illustrious among the vanquished were obsequiously lauding with grovelling fatuity—that "the present and the real belong to him," but to predict that the tide would overwhelm him, these things in conjunction with observations as acute as any casual traveller could possibly make on a foreign land, written in sentences stimulating in their energy, were some of the features of the work which the author wanted to publish in France. Napoleon refused his licence, the proofs were seized and, when exiled once again, she found a change of prefecture at Coppet made that "a prison" to her.

Then came the folly of her second marriage at the age of forty-five with a handsome youth of twenty-three, Rocca, whose health had been ruined by a wound in the Spanish war. The marriage was a secret one, but seems to have given her happiness. The escape from Coppet has about it something of a comic opera adventure, but after touring viâ Vienna, Petersburg, and Stockholm, she eventually reached London, where she was mobbed to her heart's content. She found society was robbed of all intellectual enjoyment by sheer force of numbers. Byron has described her rather tartly, though they were on terms of friendship, and Sir James Mackintosh observes that she thought Miss Austen's novels were commonplace. *Germany* was at last published—in the same month as the battle of Leipzig—and it at once won the admiration of Europe. On the abdication of her foe, Madame de Staël returned to Paris, where she was the very centre of the Restoration. She only survived the agitated terrors of the Hundred Days for a couple of years, ending her life with the same intense interest that she had always displayed, and to the last looking lovingly on Rocca. She had

had a paralytic stroke, and he was dying. Wrote Chateaubriand:

> "These two spectres looking at each other in silence, the one up and pale, the other half lying down, her face coloured with blood that was about to descend again and to turn cold at her heart, made me shiver."

As a writer Madame de Staël lacked sense of form and creative power. She could give a series of impressions, but nothing continuous. However, she voiced eternal truths in dignified accents worthy of the classics, and helped to discover Germany to Europe. It is her exuberant vitality as mother, lover, writer, talker, traveller, thinker that renders her such a figure of mark—that and the fact that she dared, however fearfully, to confront Napoleon and defy him.

To pass from her to her friend, Juliet Récamier, is to leave storm and stress to encounter delicious peace. There is no woman in whose case it is so difficult to say that this or that was the secret of her success. Devoid of intellectual ability, she was the worshipped ideal of the most remarkable intellects of her time. Apparently destitute of passion herself, she inspired frenzies of emotion in men of the most divergent temperaments and pursuits. No other woman has been able to transform so many lovers into devoted friends. She is the beautiful and benevolent sphinx of her epoch.

Born in Lyons, she was brought to Paris and met all the leaders of literary and political existence prior to the Terror. In the house of Barrère she first encountered her husband Récamier. To this day the marriage between the banker of forty-two and the maid of fifteen remains mysterious, but their relations seem to have been only those of companions. It at

least provided the girl with ample funds, and very soon Lucien Bonaparte was writing her, amid engrossing pursuits, the love-letters of the veriest schoolboy infatuation. Madame Récamier received many from many others; they never ruffled her calm.

The friendship with Madame de Staël—one of the closest friendships between illustrious women—was notable for the unswerving loyalty and fidelity displayed by Madame Récamier. If she was without heart, as some critics aver, she had a high standard of friendship and fearlessly attained it. Whilst Constant and Madame de Staël were running through the whole scale of romantic emotion, Prince Augustus of Prussia fell in love with Mme. Récamier, and "was the only man who had ever made her heart beat for him." Her life was ill attuned. He tried to persuade her to claim a divorce and to marry him. They parted with vows of fidelity. Then from Paris she wrote she was "bound by conventions which are like duties." Later she added, "between happiness and myself the barrier was placed for ever." Too tender to release herself, she tried to cool the flame of her lover's passion.

There was some measure of Napoleonic persecution because of her friendship for Madame de Staël; darkness because of her husband's second failure in business; and then she retired to a small suite of rooms on the third floor of the convent of the *Abbaye aux bois*. Here she gathered a *salon* of all her fervent admirers and friends, and thither came that "hawk into an aviary," Chateaubriand, and henceforth all was changed. He was the literary glory of France, the conqueror of most female hearts. "I had never invented anything like that," he had said of her at their first meeting, and twelve years later they re-met for the second time at the death of Madame de Staël.

"He imposed himself with all the seductions of genius and all the exactions of an unparalleled egoism. From the very first he took on the airs of a conqueror and a master." He was indeed the first master of the destiny of Juliet Récamier, though he was fifty and she now forty-one. She was infatuated, and most bitterly resented his subsequent devotion to other duties. Yet she could say in the early times, "He dreams of plans of conduct like plans of his works, and composes fine-sounding phrases." For his sake she became involved in politics; in his disgrace she was in Italy. When they re-met, "not a word of explanation or reproach was exchanged." Nothing henceforth was to interrupt the affectionate friendship.

Everybody came to her informal evenings, even Balzac when he was very little known. To give the names would be to recite the celebrities of the day. She had five circles of chairs. The women sat down, the men moved about. As guests came, she endeavoured to form suitable groups. Chateaubriand went as ambassador to Rome; Madame Récamier was at the renowned first night of Hernani. These were incidents in an existence in which were many literary cabals, much talk of politics and art, a healthy survey of contemporary life and the exercise of a calm sweet influence; and then came the last conqueror of all. Left a widower when very old, Chateaubriand begged her to accept the name he bore. She refused it, but morning by morning she arrived with the same five friends to hear the readings of her friend's memoirs, and was present at his death. Her grief was distracted by publishing these voluminous and much attacked compilations; and then she succumbed to cholera, fortified by all the consolations of the rites of the Church.

Ballanche observed that "Madame Récamier lived much more in her friends than in herself. The worship of talent was one of her characteristics." This is true. She did nothing very important herself, but her importance is unquestionable. De Barante has declared her coquetry went beyond friendship, without arriving as far as love. These two views furnish the best key to her success. Less satisfactory is the ridicule of the De Goncourts for this "Madonna of conversation." The basis of her character was kindheartedness. As for her appearance, let her adopted daughter, Madame Lenormant, speak:

> "A supple and elegant figure, neck and shoulders admirable, both as to shape and proportion; a little red mouth, pearly teeth, pretty arms, perhaps a trifle too thin; naturally curling chestnut hair, and nose delicate and regular in shape, but very French in type; an incomparably brilliant complexion that outshone all others; a physiognomy that was full of simplicity and occasionally most roguish, rendered irresistibly attractive by the kindliness of its expressive touch of something at once indolent and proud, and an admirably well-set head. To her truly might have been applied St. Simon's words concerning the Duchess of Burgundy—that she walked like a goddess on the clouds."

Lady Hamilton possessed all the passion which no one could rouse in Madame Récamier. From the outset desire coloured her lovely cheek and lent fire to her beautiful eyes. Romney has recorded the extraordinary mobility of her exquisite features. Every artist of her time painted her, and each saw her differently. Reynolds, Gainsborough, Hoppner, Lawrence, Cosway, Angelica Kauffmann, and Madame

le Brun possessed the more illustrious brushes that limned her. Her *Attitudes*, privately performed and perpetually varied, astounded even Goethe by their grace and intensity as well as by their delicate flashes of inspiration. He wrote:

> "The Chevalier Hamilton, so long resident here as English Ambassador, so long, too, connoisseur and student of Art and Nature, has found their counterpart and acme with exquisite delight in a lovely girl—English, and some twenty years of age. She is exceedingly beautiful and finely built. She wears a Greek garb becoming her to perfection. She then merely loosens her locks, takes a pair of shawls, and effects changes of postures, moods, gestures, mien, and appearance that make one really feel as if one were in some dream. Here is visible, complete, and bodied forth in movements of surprising variety, all that so many artists have sought in vain to fix and render. Successively standing, kneeling, seated, reclining, grave, sad, sportive, teasing, abandoned, penitent, alluring, threatening, agonised. One follows the other, and grows out of it. She knows how to choose and shift the simple folds of her single kerchief for every expression, and to adjust it into a hundred kinds of headgear. Her elderly knight holds the torches for her performance, and is absorbed in his soul's desire. In her he finds the charm of all the antiques, the profiles on Sicilian coins, the Apollo Belvedere himself."

This "masterpiece of the Arch-Artist"—as Goethe also calls her—was the daughter of the smith of Nesse, one Lyon. He died in the year of her birth. To her mother Emma remained devoted, and under the name

of Mrs. Cadogan she wandered after her daughter and seems to have been recognized and liked by the illustrious people she subsequently encountered. Emma's childhood must have been passed in extreme poverty. It is certain that she was a servant in a surgeon's house, a fellow domestic being Jane Powell, subsequently a noted actress. Next she became the living advertisement of a quack doctor. Afterwards there was a short period when, as mistress of a Sussex mansion, she learnt to ride fearlessly, but wearied of the society of rakes. Then she fell in with Greville, fell in love with him—a man of superior intellect and calculating brain—and set up a thrifty establishment under his protection. This is one of her outpourings to him:

"Oh! Greville, when I think on your goodness, your tender kindness, my heart is so full of gratitude that I want words to express it. But I have one happiness in view which I am determined to practice, and that is evenness of temper and steadness of mind. For endead I have thought so much of your amiable goodness when you have been tried to the utmost, that I will, endead I will manege myself, and try to be like Greville. Endead I can never be like him. But I will do all I can towards it, and I am sure you will not desire more. I think if the time would come over again, I would be differant. But it does not matter. There is nothing like bying expearance. I may be happyer for it hereafter, and I will think of the time coming and not of the past, except to make comparrasons, to shew you what alterations there is for the best. . . . I will try, I will do my utmost; and I can only regrett that fortune will not put it in my power to make a return for all the kindness and goodness you have showed me."

He was utterly unworthy of her affection, for with her beauty he profoundly calculated upon preventing his uncle marrying. That uncle was Sir William Hamilton, and Greville induced him to take Emma abroad. It was some time before she would believe in such perfidy. "But I submit to what God and Greville pleases," and propitiated by a blue hat she acquiesced.

Very soon she was metamorphised into the beloved wife of the English Ambassador at Naples. The wedded pair were perfectly happy; she showed great feminine adaptiveness, became counsellor and friend to Maria Carolina the Queen, evinced absorbing interest in political affairs and—met Nelson. That dare-devil, superb little Englishman loved the element of frank adventuress in Lady Hamilton's temperament. He transformed her in his own mind and she stimulated him. Their affection was soon a matter of general knowledge, and there can be no doubt that old Sir William Hamilton placidly and intentionally refused to allow his peace to be disturbed by it.

Any man might have been pardoned for falling in love with this exquisite beauty. Over her portraits to-day it is a pleasure to pore, and a modern writer, Miss Moorhouse, has very happily compiled a description of her which conveys as clear an impression as any by her own contemporaries:

> "Her colouring was of the pure and perfect kind that goes with warm auburn hair, and this same hair was almost the greatest of her many beauties, growing in delicious waves from the broad, low forehead, and flowing almost to her heels—the hair of a true 'Bacchante.' Her eyes were grey—the 'colour of genius,' as it has been called, and in her own way Emma certainly was a genius; but her

eyes must have been of the kind of grey that was capable of deepening and brightening, for they have been described as both violet and blue. Some critics considered her beautiful, and her uncommon mouth the most exquisite of her features."

As for Nelson, he will return to her "either crowned with laurel or covered with cypress," as he himself phrases it. And again, "I am confident, for the conqueror is become the conquered." To which she retorts: "God, what a victory! Never, never has there been anything so complete. I would feel it a glory to die in such a cause. No, I would not like to die till I see and embrace the Victor of the Nile." To his wife Nelson wrote, "I hope some day to have the pleasure of introducing you to Lady Hamilton; she is one of the best women in this world, she is an honour to her sex."

Into all the Neapolitan episodes, even into the rather vulgar return to England with its pomp during the Continental progress, there is no need to go. Lord Fitzharris, when at St. Veit, wrote: "Nelson's health was drunk with a flourish of trumpets and firing of cannon. Lady Hamilton is, without exception, the most coarse, ill-mannered, disagreeable woman we met with." In London, Lady Hamilton and Lady Nelson appeared side by side in a theatre, and subsequently a violent scene ensued. The triumph of the hero seemed sufficient for him to flout his feelings for the daughter of the Cheshire blacksmith in the face of the national decorum, but Calypso made love to Ulysses more happily at "paradise" Merton, however, than in London. "Oh! how I hate to be stared at," said Nelson. It is interesting to remember that his old father, the rector of Burnham

Thorpe, kept up a friendly correspondence with Lady Hamilton.

In prosperity it must be confessed that Nelson's heroine rapidly coarsened. Possibly vexed by social disapprobation, she did not find an English drawing-room her best *mise-en-scène.* An unusual feminine trait was that she was pleased at growing stout. Originally she drank porter to strengthen her voice, then it affected her figure, and we all sadly remember how she gave way to intemperance before her death. She appears to have mourned her husband, and soon afterwards Nelson hoisted his flag on the *Victory* to go once more cruising in the Mediterranean. Left in very sordid company, commissioning the Herald's College to invent "the arms of Lyons," doing a thousand humdrum things, Lady Hamilton again emerges something of her old attractive self when she declares:

> "Did I ever keep him at home, did I not share in his glory? Even this last fatal victory, it was I bid him go forth. Did he not pat me on the back, call me brave Emma, and said, 'If there were more Emmas there would be more Nelsons.'"

To Nelson sailing to Trafalgar on the *Victory:*

> "How I do idolize you—the dearest husband of my heart, you are all in this world to your Emma. May God send you victory and home to your Emma, Horatia and Paradise Merton; for when you are there, it will be paradise. My own Nelson, may God preserve you for the sake of your affectionate Emma."

On his desk after his death lay this unfinished letter:

"My dearest beloved Emma, the dear friend of my bosom, the signal has been made that the enemies' combined fleet is coming out of port. May the God of Battles crown my endeavour with success; at all events I will take care that my name shall ever be most dear to you and Horatia, both of whom I love as much as my own life; and as my last writing before the battle will be to you, so I hope in God that I shall live to finish my letter after the battle. May Heaven bless you, prays your Nelson and Bronte."

His dying words were, "Remember I leave Lady Hamilton and my daughter to my country." It is a national disgrace that England disregarded this legacy of her finest hero. The sordid penury in which she dragged out her remaining years, if they sully her in her abasement, condemn the hypocritical miserliness of her country. Her work was done when Nelson fell. With him she will be inseparably associated and therefore with his final achievement, the greatest naval victory since God in His elements fought with England against the Spanish Armada.

LITERARY WOMEN OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

THROUGHOUT this work the sympathetic reader must have felt that the exigencies of space have compelled the author metaphorically to pour gallons into a pint measure, but when the present section is reached so much ought to be said that the position becomes yet more difficult. Therefore it is compulsory to make an arbitrary selection; consequently commentary will be restricted to one French and a few of the English mistresses of the pen. It is superfluous to add that George Sand (1804–1876) of course takes precedence of all her Gallic sisters.

The impression of the author, who has made a close and careful study of the subject, is that George Sand was an unworthy vampire, who sucked the vitality out of at least two great men—Alfred de Musset and Frederic Chopin. That they loved her, and that their love for her stimulated them to produce some of their finest work, is undeniable; but that she made them suffer and withered them is a formidable indictment. The keynote of her nature was an eternal craving for fresh impressions, and yet it may be confidently asserted that she never loved—for love always eluded her grasp, was a will-o'-the-wisp she could never catch. She was not beautiful, she had no striking bodily fascination, and if she was clever,

it was in a great measure the receptive cleverness which adapted the genius of others to her purpose. What, then, was the strange secret of her intense attraction for so many of the most mentally endowed, most mentally overstrung men of the day? It was her calmness of soul. The woman was far more subtle than what she wrote. The interest she excites is greater than she merits; it exists because she forms the keynote to one of the greatest dramas of intellectual passion that has been played on the life-stage of her time. Possibly were the real truth ascertainable, the honour of both George Sand and Alfred de Musset might be exalted. We possess an extraordinary amount of elucidatory light on an attachment at once sordid and entrancing. Nevertheless, it remains and will remain for ever debatable.

Her grandmother was a daughter of Marshal Saxe, and her grandfather that typical cultured Frenchman, Dupin de Franceuil. Their son, Maurice, a soldier and a scribbler, had a daughter by a milliner. This daughter, Aurore, was George Sand. As a child she had a habit of dreaming which soon gave her a stupid look;[1] and she lived an imaginative existence entirely apart from her mutinous mundane one. Therefore she was consigned to the English convent in Paris where, after much purposeless excitement, she went through some girlish experiences of religious emotion. Thence she plunged into literature, and Byron so affected her that disgust of life produced desire of death, and if her mare had not saved her by a fine leap, she must have been lost in a river.

Subsequently she allowed herself to be married as passively as she performed all the outward actions

[1] *Histoire de ma Vie*, by George Sand, Paris.

of her life.[1] Motherhood soon absorbed her—for a while; and then came emancipation into Parisian literary life. She was a voluntary fugitive from husband and home at twenty-seven, and sat writing and shivering in her garret, or went to first nights or concerts, leading the tumultuous disintegrated existence known as "*la vie.*" She almost made painting designs on snuff-boxes her profession. It was not well enough paid. So the pen was preferred to the brush.

Her books all began in poetical conception; in development they usually deteriorated. To-day it is said she is not read in France. All her heroes believe that in yielding to love they offer a species of worship to God.[2] She experienced this in life. Did not Liszt, Chopin, and de Musset all say so? Liszt was too volatile to be held by her; Chopin bore the seeds of death in him and she fanned them. It was with de Musset that the great issue lay. We have both sides of the story written by both the players.[3] Does not Heine's word-portrait of her elucidate the sordid romance?

> "Her face might perhaps be called more beautiful than interesting, yet the cast of her features is not severely antique, as it is softened by modern sentiment, which enwraps them with a veil of sadness. Her forehead is not high, and a wealth of hair of a most beautiful auburn falls on either side of her head to her shoulders. Her nose is not aquiline and decided, nor is it an intelligent snub nose. It is simply a straight and ordinary one. A most good-humoured, though not very attractive,

[1] *George Sand*, by Elme Caro, translated by Gustave Masson, London, 1888, p. 29.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[3] *Confession d'un Enfant du Siècle*, by de Musset; *Elle et Lui*, by George Sand.

smile generally plays round her mouth. Her conversation is not brilliant. She has absolutely none of the sparkling wit that distinguishes her countrywomen; neither has she their inexhaustible power of chattering. She listens to the conversation of others with a pleasant and sometimes singular smile, as if she were trying to absorb their best utterances."

That is it. We look on her as a light soprano mingling her notes among a glorious male choir of natural tenors and superb baritones. We learn she was singularly modest; that was because her woman's sense gave her a sounder estimate of her own ability than the incense burnt before her would seem to suggest. At Nohant she finally entered into that domesticity dear to the heart of every woman. To think of her in Venice smoking cigars, drugging and debilitating de Musset, far younger than herself, far more wonderful, infinitely more impressionable—"a lute, forgotten on a chair, resounding to the least breath of wind"[1]—that is one of the debauches of literature, one of the profanities which has robbed us of masterpieces.

Turning to English writers, Mary Somerville, as a "blue-stocking," seems to link the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in her honest, half-forgotten hands. She imbibed health when she ran on the sands of Burntisland, and the store of energy thus acquired resulted in the fact that in her eighty-ninth year she could write a book on *Molecular and Microscopic Science*. As a child she taught herself Latin to read Newton's *Principia*, and pored over Euclid. Her dissertations on physical geography and astronomy, if

[1] De Musset's own phrase about himself, quoted by Wladimir Karénine in *George Sand*, Paris, 1899, p. 23.

now obsolete, bore no small share in popularizing science. There was nothing portentous about this unpretentious and most capable lady. As a girl she was called "the Rose of Jedburgh"; her charm and genial manners were never impeached, and her enjoyment in music and painting seems to have been combined with some talent for both arts. She was a friend to the best interests of her sex, whilst never losing her clear vision of a suitable if unimpassioned balance of existence.

Miss Austen forms the most remarkable of the group of writers heralded by Miss Burney, in which Miss Edgeworth and Miss Ferrier were included. All of them were in contrast with Mrs. Radcliffe, the Miss Corelli of her epoch. Born in the year of the American Revolution, Jane Austen is the pre-eminent novelist of manners. She had no literary acquaintances,[1] nobody took notes of her doings and sayings; and yet she brought the manner of Richardson into touch with modern methods.

Half her life was spent in Steventon Parsonage in Hampshire. Her home existence was happy, and it is noteworthy that sisterly love is a strong motive in the majority of her novels. She was trained to self-command that forbade the expression of deep emotion, and this probably inspired the little reticences which add to the old-world charm in her writings. Of philosophic and scientific study not a trace is to be found. In this as in everything she is the antithesis of George Eliot, and it is interesting to recall that Charlotte Brontë expressed great distaste at the advice of G. H. Lewes to study Jane Austen.

The first reception of *Pride and Prejudice* was its prompt return by a publisher; *Northanger Abbey*,

[1] *Jane Austen*, by Goldwin Smith, London, 1890, p. 12.

having been bought for ten pounds, was allowed to lie for many years in the drawers of another publisher, who gladly sold it back for the sum he had given for it. Miss Austen had early shown a marked interest in studying intricate character, but she was never in any sense a literary woman. Novel writing formed the recreation of a quiet, sociable domestic existence hardly touched by any serious attachment.[1] She was sensitive to the feeling, lingering in those days, that a woman in writing a book was rather over-stepping the limitations of her sex, and there is a tradition that she declined to meet the author of *Corinne* as the author of *Pride and Prejudice*, because she would enter no house she was not asked to as Jane Austen. As a matter of fact, she never actually avowed authorship, but no woman who ostentatiously chatters about her own writings can boast that she has equalled Miss Austen's capacity for charming away dull hours by her surpassing gift of telling a story with unerring precision. Her existence was one of observation and unselfishness. In her very last letter she writes:

> "As for my dearest sister, my tender, watchful, indefatigable nurse has not been made ill by her exertions. As for what I owe her, and the anxious affection of all my beloved family on this occasion, I can only cry over it and pray God to bless them more and more."

She died in the same year as Madame de Staël, with the quiet propriety she had shown throughout a blameless life, and when the end came, on being asked whether there was anything she wanted, "Nothing but death," she said. It is noteworthy

[1] Despite the qualification introduced by Mr. Austen Leigh in the second edition of his memoir of her, his aunt.

that the *Annual Register* did not mention her decease. Her memorial has been in the sincere appreciation of posterity.

To estimate Miss Edgeworth, it must be remembered that her father had four wives, who all left children, and that Maria was the eldest of them all. She idolized her father, a man of extraordinary powers with a capacity for evolving schemes of which velocipedes, tramways, and telegraphs were but a few items.[1] Being an Irishman living in Ireland, he lacked the practical energy to bring any one idea to the definite issue which would have commanded enormous wealth. Miss Edgeworth herself was lionized on her occasional appearances in London and Paris, but these were incidents in a life mainly spent in a characteristic Irish home.

It was Ireland which stimulated her best work—notably *Castle Rackrent*—and the breadth, the versatility, the wit and the gaiety of the Irish character give charm to her writing. Despite one passing episode with Edelcrantz, she remained unmarried, sincere, intelligent, and self-contained. Some one asked her how she came to understand children so well, what charm she exerted over them.

"I don't know; I lie down and let them crawl over me," was the simple answer. It is a gem.

What one best remembers is her visit to Sir Walter Scott, of whom she noted:

> "It is quite delightful to see Scott and his family in the country; breakfast, dinner, supper; then came flow of kindness, fondness and genius, far, far surpassing his works, his letters, and all my hopes and imagination."

[1] *A Book of Sibyls*, by Mrs. Richmond Ritchie, London, 1883, p. 53.

Characteristic, too, is her observation to a cousin: "In this my sixtieth year, to commence in a few days, I am resolved to make great progress." A little later Ticknor gives us this picture:

> "As we drove to the door, Miss Edgeworth came out to meet us—a small, short, spare body of about sixty-seven, with extremely frank and kind manners, but who always looked straight into your face with a pair of mild, deep grey eyes whenever she speaks to you. Her conversation was always ready, as full of vivacity and variety as I can imagine. She was disposed to defend everybody, and in her intercourse with her family she was quite delightful. About herself as an author she seems to have no reserve or secrets. 'No one can know what I owe to my father. He advised and directed me in everything. I never could have done anything without him.'"

Age never told on her, although quite late in life fresh sorrows befell her. At eighty-two she writes to her sister:—

> "I am heartily obliged and delighted by your being such a goose and Richard such a gander as to be frightened out of your wits by my climbing a ladder to take off the top of the old clock."

All through her life she was humorously conscious of her own plainness, and would never sit for her portrait.[1] On her desk her father, two years before his death, inscribed the following words:—

> "On this humble desk were written all the numerous works of my daughter, Maria Edgeworth, in

[1] *A Study of Maria Edgeworth*, by Grace Oliver, 3rd ed., Boston, 1882.

the common sitting-room of my family. In those works, which were chiefly written to please me, she has never attacked the personal character of any human being or interfered with the opinions of any sect or party, religious or political. While endeavouring to inform and instruct others, she improved and amused her own mind, and gratified her heart, which I do believe is better than her head."

With this paternal judgment she may be left. Sir Walter Scott once said: "Some one has described the novels of Miss Edgeworth as a *sort of essence* of common-sense, and the definition is not inappropriate." Macaulay called her "the second woman of her age," counting Madame de Staël as the first. Possibly the highest merit is that she was a progressive and modern thinker, embodying in her novels the spirit of the advancing movement on which she had a modest influence. She died in 1849.

Remote as the poles is the contrast between these two chaste spinsters and the daughter of Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, who married and survived Shelley. She was an enthusiastic girl, who, on meeting the poet, awoke to a sense of companionship with his radiant spirit. In him she found the same illusive dreams that her dead mother had tried to grasp. Like him she was burning to do good to her kind. One day she met him beside her mother's grave, and almost at once they secretly left for France. There never was any dislike shown by Mary towards Shelley's first distracting and unsuitable wife Harriet, but after the latter drowned herself the lovers were quietly married. In Italy Mary Shelley seems to have cared but little for Byron's friendship for her husband, and had he lived it is probable that Shelley and his wife

would have soon parted, for his ardent unsatisfied nature was growing satiated with her. Lady Shelley has left this tribute :—

> "I knew her myself better than anyone, for we never parted from the day of my marriage till that of her death, nearly three years of daily and hourly intercourse when there was no reserve. She was the most tender, gentle and noble woman, who ever trod this earth—lovely in mind and person—with wondrous intellect, yet retiring, shy and extremely quiet. Yet when a subject interested or moved her, she would speak with a flow of eloquence. I believe no thought of self ever occurred to her. I have no words to say how dear and sacred her memory is to me, nor how great a privilege it has been to know one so true and pure and good."

It was four months after the tragedy in the Gulf of Spezzia that Mary Shelley noted : "I have made my first probation in writing, and it has done me much good." But it seems true that her literary productions were disproportionate to her intellectual force. *Frankenstein* was really the outcome of an attempt to invent something uncanny after nightly talks on the supernatural between Shelley, Byron, Williams, and Trelawney. Its success lies not only in its suggestion of horror, but because it pictures unseen verities. The intense earnestness always characteristic of Mary Shelley here lends emphasis. In this and in the notes to her husband's poems her merit is best shown. Generosity she had always displayed, and it was ill requited on her return to England. She never wore the conventional weeds. An eye witness—Charles Cowden Clarke—writes of her "well-shaped, golden-

haired head, almost always a little bent and drooping; her marble-white shoulders and arms statuesquely visible in the perfectly plain black velvet dress; her thoughtful earnest eyes—the singular flexibility of her hand, which permitted her bending the fingers back so as almost to approach the portion of her arm above her wrist." Amid industrious writing, her recreations were the occasional delight of seeing good acting and hearing good music. On the news of Byron's death she wrote:—

> "God grant I may die young. A new race is springing up about me. At the age of twenty-six I am in the condition of an aged person. All my old friends are gone; I have no wish to form new; I cling to the few remaining; but they slide away, and my heart fails when I think by how few ties I hold to earth."

It was not for thirty-seven years that she passed away, in 1851, believing that her long survival of her husband had been a means of perfecting her spirit for their renewed life in the future.[1]

Only four years younger by birth, but surviving her by many, was that widely famous but distinctly unfeminine celebrity, Harriet Martineau. There is one pathetic touch in her autobiography: "My life has had no spring"; and her mother's temper may have been responsible for her "habit of misery" during childhood. She was handicapped by deafness, and was almost destitute of the senses of smell and taste, whilst she suffered from indigestion. All personal manifestations of emotion seem to have been severely prohibited in youth, but the family creed of Unitarian-

[1] *Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, by Helen Moore, 1886, p. 346.

ism formed her chief happiness.[1] Directly she had hours of liberty she began to study philosophy, although the death of her father entailed considerable privation and struggle. The reticence of her life deepened after the minister to whom she was engaged was seized with brain fever; when his physicians sent for her, her mother forbade her to go, and her obedience cost her lover his life.[2] She now began to be a prolific writer of the Sunday-school type of stories.

For a while her mother tried to force her to earn her living by her needle instead of by her pen. But she achieved her great success with her *Illustrations of Political Economy*, which brought her to the notice of every thinker of the day. Her sympathy with democracy and her support of the Malthusian doctrine, however, drew down some adverse criticism.[3] Two years' travel in the United States elicited her notable declaration of anti-slavery principles, and so strongly did she feel this that she and she alone kept English opinion on the right side.[4]

In appearance she was above middle height with a slender figure. She certainly was not beautiful, for besides the noticeable projection of the under lip, her cheeks sloped in too much towards the chin. The nose was straight, the eyes clear grey, the hair of so dark a brown as to appear nearly black. Family cares on her return fell heavily on her and, combined with over-work, entailed five years of illness. Then she was restored to complete health by means of mesmerism, which she was induced to try at the instance of Bulwer Lytton. At the age of forty-two

[1] *Harriet Martineau*, by Mrs. Fenwick Miller, London, 1884, p. 21.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 53. [3] Notably in the *Quarterly Review*.
[4] In the opinion of W. E. Forster.

she was free to have a house of her own, one she built at Ambleside in the Lake District. After her tour in the East, a world which did not really care learnt that she had ceased to have a theology. Her theory was that one great cause for the slow advance of civilization is the degree to which good men and women have occupied themselves with supernatural concerns. She was prepared to occupy the felon's dock on a charge of blasphemy, but martyrdom was denied her. The rest of her life was occupied in energetic journalism and translation. She could never be idle, and she could never write in judgment except with priggish and austere censure, e.g. on Brougham in her *History of the Thirty Years' Peace.* In her very last letter to her friend Atkinson, she expressed herself:—

"I cannot think of any future as at all probable, except the 'annihilation' from which some people recoil with so much horror. I find myself here in the universe—I know not how, whence or why. I see everything in the universe go out and disappear, and I see no reason for supposing that it is not an actual and entire death. And for *my* part I have no objection to such extinction. The universe opens so widely before my view, and I see the old notions of death and scenes to follow to be so merely human—so impossible to be true, when one glances through the range of science—that I see nothing to be done but to wait, without fear or hope or ignorant prejudice, for the expiration of life. I have no wish for further experience, nor have I any fear of it. Under the weariness of illness I long to be asleep; but I have not set my mind on any state."

This statement of annihilation cannot be omitted from her history. How deeply is it contrasted with the devout fervour of Christina Rossetti :—

Brief dawn and noon and setting time!
Our rapid-rounding moon has fled:
A black eclipse before the prime
Has swallowed up that shining head;
Eternity holds up her looking-glass,
The eclipse of time will pass,
And all that lovely light return to sight.

One of a remarkable family, the poetess herself possessed the quiet simplicity of real greatness. In youth she mixed with the Pre-Raphaelite Brethren, and their reverent attitude in art she has transcribed in poetry. Fullness and sweetness are her characteristics in verse and in life. She had practically no history. For fifty-four years she was with the mother she loved, and nearly all her books are dedicated to her.[1] Like Miss Martineau she remained unmarried, but both her suitors she rejected because they were not Christians of defined views. Her beauty has been memorialized on the canvases of Holman Hunt and Ford Madox Brown. Her personality in early life was one of fitful energy contrasting with moods of marked reserve. Later it became wholly devout, without exaggeration. Such a phrase as "God accepts dues as gifts; man receives gifts as dues," represents her quiet piety. Her gift for melody in verse is perhaps the sweetest within the limitations of her few themes since Keats.

Farewell, land of love, Italy,
Sister-land of Paradise,
With my own feet I have trodden thee,
Have seen thee with mine own eyes.
I remember, thou forgettest me,
I remember.

[1] *Christina Rossetti*, by Mackenzie Bell, London, 1898, p. 5.

And again :—

Chide not; let me breathe a little,
For I shall not mourn him long;
Though the life-cord was so brittle,
The love-cord was very strong.
I would make a little space
Till I find a sleeping place.

And :—

The cloven East brings forth the sun
The cloven West doth bury him,
What time his gorgeous race is run
And all the world grows dim.
A funeral moon is lit in heaven's hollow,
And pale the starlights follow.

Invited to compose a biography of Mrs. Browning, Miss Rossetti replied: "I should write with enthusiasm on that great poetess and, I believe, lovable woman whom I was never, however, so fortunate as to meet." And again: "Yet all said, I doubt whether the woman is born, or for many a long day, if ever, will be born, who will balance not to say outweigh Mrs. Browning."

Both were alike in their love of Italy, but Mrs. Browning had a vastly broader outlook on life, and, whilst both wrote fine sonnets, in the opinion of Dante Gabriel Rossetti himself, his sister could never have written those *From The Portuguese.* On the balance of the sexes Miss Rossetti wrote :—

> "In one sense I feel as if I had gone deep, for my objection seems to myself a fundamental one, underlying the whole structure of female claims. Does it not appear as if the Bible was based on an understood unalterable distinction between men and women, their position, duties, privileges? The fact of the Priesthood being exclusively man's, leaves me in no doubt that the highest functions are not in this world open to both sexes."

But Mrs. Browning:—

> "Please to recollect that when I talk of women I do not speak of them as many men do, according to a separate peculiar and womanly standard, but according to the common standard of human nature."[1]

Elizabeth Barrett was the descendant of West Indian landowners, and the favourite child of her autocratic and angry father, who was so proud of her infantile attempts at poetry that he printed fifty copies of an epic she wrote at the age of eleven. An injury to her spine laid her on her back for many years, during which she "had fits of Pope and Byron and Coleridge, and read Greek as hard as some of your Oxonians in the Bodleian; gathered visions from Plato and the dramatists, and ate and drank Greek and made my head ache with it." Miss Mitford describes her as

> "a slight, girlish figure, very delicate, with exquisite hands and feet, a round face with a most noble forehead, a large mouth beautifully formed and full of expression, lips like parted coral, teeth large, regular, and glittering with healthy whiteness, large dark eyes with such eyelashes resting on the cheek when cast down, when turned upwards touching the flexible and expressive eyebrow, a dark complexion, literally as bright as the dark china rose, a profusion of silky dark curls, and a look of youth and of modesty hardly to be expressed."[2]

[1] Quoted by W. T. Stead in his preface to selection from her poems in the Masterpiece Library.

[2] *Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, by J. H. Ingram, Eminent Women Series. London, 1888, p. 21.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

FROM THE DRAWING BY RUDOLF LEHMANN IN 1859 IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Soon it appeared as though she must be a chronic invalid, though her mental vigour never relaxed, and her courage under illness was marvellous. Her ripe powers may be instanced in one stanza :

> Cloud-walls of the morning's grey
> Faced with amber column,
> Crowned with crimson cupola,
> From a sunset solemn.
> May-mists, for the casements, fetch,
> Pale and glimmering;
> With a sunbeam hid in each
> And a smell of spring.

But as the years brought deserved fame to the greatest poetess in the English language, her health to some extent improved, stimulated by her valiant outlook on life. She wrote of herself as "forced to be satisfied with the sofa and silence." Instead, love came to her in the person of a stimulating fellow poet, Robert Browning. A writer hard to classify he possessed a stirring enthusiasm and a certain originality which make him a memorable projection on the grand landscape of English poetry. That they loved, and loved fervently, the poets soon found, though she was an invalid of thirty-eight who had been seared by many griefs. Luxury and submission to her father's will were both laid aside at the impulsive instigation of her lover. Literally she rose from her sick couch to marry "under circumstances peculiarly interesting, and such as to render imprudence the height of prudence," as her most intimate friend, Mrs. Jameson, observed. "She married," added her trustee, Henry Chorley, "after an intimacy suspected by none, save a very few, under circumstances of no ordinary romance, and in marrying she secured for the residue of her life an emancipation from prison, and an amount of happiness, delightful to think of, as falling to the lot of one

who, from a darkened chamber, had still exercised such a power of delighting others."

Few women ever so thoroughly flouted a tyrannical father, and though he cursed her and never forgave her, it may be safely said that his malevolent fury had little power to hurt, for love gave the victory, so absorbed was she in love for her loving husband. It was to Italy he took her, "not merely improved but transformed," and Florence became her home. She alone of all the women-writers dealt with in this chapter, except Mrs. Shelley, had a son.

> Stand out, my blue-eyed prophet; thou to whom
> The earliest world-day light that ever flowed
> Through Casa Guidi windows chanced to come.

This rounded off her life and completed it, leading up to her composition of *Aurora Leigh*, the theme of which had been germinating in her head for years, much being autobiographical. It portrays, too, her keen interest in the problems of life, viewed perhaps from a point a little aloof, because health had prevented her from being as actively engaged in existence as she would have desired. She had three cardinal points: a wholly idealized belief in Napoleon III; a fervent interest in spiritualism; and a passionate desire for Italian freedom. Her American friend, Mrs. Story, avers that the treaty of Villafranca "hastened her into the grave, as she never fully shook off the severe attack of illness occasioned by this check upon her life-hopes." She died unexpectedly from the effects of a chill. At night she told her child, "I am better, dear, much better." Her husband towards morning saw her in an ecstasy, and her last words are the most fitting commentary on her own life and writings: "It is beautiful."

The municipality of Florence erected a marble slab upon Casa Guidi with this inscription by Tommaseo:

Here Wrote And Died
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING
Who In her Woman's Heart United
The Wisdom Of The Sage And The Eloquence Of The Poet
With Her Golden Verse Linking Italy To England.
Grateful Florence Placed
This Memorial
A.D. 1861.

This recalls her own lines in Casa Guidi Windows:

And that the heart of Italy must beat,
While such a voice had leave to rise serene
'Twixt church and palace of a Florence street.

To quote illustrative passages from Mrs. Browning indicative of her beauteous power of song would be to imply that England is as negligent of her verse as it is of Byron's. No great nation could raise its head beneath such a crushing double indictment of its literary appreciativeness, and therefore no more need be said.

That George Eliot should have acquired such a reputation in England, one so infinitely surpassing that of her infinitely more gifted husband, is a thing which must perplex a dispassionate observer. She developed the German dry-as-dust system in relation to English fiction; she provided a tinselly, besmudged perversion which she induced the fiction-reading public credulously to regard as a mediæval Florentine romance. She lacked the power and the courage to be naturalistic, whilst she showed as little ability to create a man as Charles Dickens displayed in describing a gentleman. Yet it is idle to deny that she founded a school of fiction of which the chief living exponent is Mrs. Humphry Ward, who locates her characters in a higher social sphere. The best

imaginative work of George Eliot was whilst in association with G. H. Lewes; the feeble didacticism and the verbosity, those are her own.

Her father was an agent who had risen in the world, and was known as a sturdy Tory. As a girl she was receptive, showed some inclination to be priggish and superior, but appreciated "the sweet poetry" of the *Christian Year*, and first appeared in print with a poem depicting devout piety but betraying no ability. Other influences subsequently brought her to a refusal to go to church and a consequent family difficulty[1]; but though there was a reconciliation, she seems to have taken her own line. One incident was a meeting with Miss Martineau, another with Emerson, "the first *man* I have ever seen." Then she became immersed in the tiresome task of translating Strauss. By the time she was thirty, she was an orphan and wrote "the only ardent hope I have for my future life is to have given me some woman's duty, some possibility of devoting myself where I may see a daily result of pure calm blessedness in the life of another."

In some editorial work, through Herbert Spencer, she meets G. H. Lewes, the most brilliant of the literary celebrities of the time. According to Douglas Jerrold, he was the ugliest man in London; he was already married, but his wife had left him. Eventually George Eliot paired off with him as George Sand did with Alfred de Musset. The analogy is complete, for the woman occupies in each case the greater share of public attention, whereas it is the man who possesses the superior merit. It was after a trip to Germany that the English couple settled at Richmond, and the

[1] *George Eliot*, by Leslie Stephen, English Men of Letters Series, London, 1902. p. 25.

series of novels appeared which bear her name. All the rest of her life is concerned with them, for her poems are forgotten, and even the favouring Lewes did not approve of her writing a play. Though acquainted with some literary people, she led a secluded but satisfied life. After the death of Lewes she created surprise by marrying again, only surviving seven months. She was certainly a painstaking student rather than a mistress of whatever knowledge she toiled at. She considered Byron "the most vulgar-minded genius that ever produced a great effect in literature," whilst Milton was her "demi-god." Her outlook on life was that of an acid pedagogue. Her religion was positivism; her later novels were philosophical propaganda; and her favourite theme—the idealist in search of a vocation—would seem to be the life-quest of Lewes.

There remain those most wonderful sisters the Brontës, whose lives form the saddest page in English biography, whose books are among the finest treasures of literature, and who, from the wildness of their Yorkshire moor, harassed, combating every tragedy which could be compressed into their lives, could yet write with a knowledge of character and a power of observation that are unsurpassable. More and more are these childless, lorn, and devoted sisters recognized as for all time and of the highest rank.[1]

Their father, perpetual curate of Haworth, a man of imperious and eccentric character, fed his children when small on potatoes and no meat to make them hardy, and burnt their clothes if he thought them too smart. Left to his care and that of a prim old maiden sister, the children were thrown on their own

[1] Mrs. Gaskell's *Memoir* will remain a classic, and the critical researches of Mr. Clement Shorter form an invaluable corollary.

resources, and it is recorded by the father himself that the eldest sister, who died at the age of eleven, read the debates and could talk on any topic as ably as a capable adult.

It seems superfluous here to trace the few and trivial incidents that marked the outward career of these girls, attempting again and again to be governesses—Emily after three months "becoming literally ill from home-sickness"—with the experiences in Brussels that inspired *Villette*, and the ill-conditioned brother who added another burden to those thrust on his sisters' shoulders by their father and circumstances. Deepest depression overshadowed their lives and found its echo alike in *Wuthering Heights* and in *Jane Eyre*, the respective masterpieces of Emily and Charlotte. The latter gave her father her great novel to read, and his criticism to the others ran:

> "Girls, do you know Charlotte has been writing a book, and it is much better than likely."

How Charlotte Brontë faced her future may be gathered from the following extract from a letter:

> "I am now thirty-two. Youth is gone—gone—and will never come back: Can't help it. It seems to me that sorrow must come some time to everybody, and those who scarcely taste it in their youth often have a more brimming and bitter cup to drain in after life; whereas those who exhaust the dregs early, who drink the lees before the wine, may reasonably hope for more palatable draughts to succeed."

What follows is almost a *danse macabre*, for life only held a procession of death.

"I think Emily seems the nearest thing to my heart," said Charlotte, and Emily sickened. Perverse, obstinate, and peevish, she refused to see a doctor or to take the medicines her sisters pressed on her. The piteous moment finally came when she whispered:

"If you will send for a doctor, I will see him now," and within two hours was dead. Her bulldog howled piteously at her door for many days.

And then Anne fell ill. Her own verses betray her aspiration, written as they were when face to face with eternity:

I hoped that with the brave and strong
  My portioned task might lie,
To toil amid the busy throng
  With purpose pure and high.

But God has fixed another part,
  And He has fixed it well;
I said so with my bleeding heart
  When first the anguish fell.

In what frame of mind Charlotte confronted the fresh catastrophe appears from an outpouring that certainly was never meant for general perusal:

> "If there were no hope beyond this world—no eternity—no life to come, Emily's fate and that which threatens Anne would be heartbreaking. I cannot forget Emily's death-day; it becomes a more fixed, a darker, a more frequently recurring idea in my mind than ever. It was very terrible. She was torn, conscious, panting, reluctant, though resolute, out of a happy life."

Anne's death-scene was still and hallowed, but after it the lonely survivor cried:

> "Solitude, Remembrance, and Longing are to be almost my sole companions all day through."

It might seem merciful that the illness of servants forced her to undertake the menial work of her father's house for a while, toil distracting her thoughts; and from that period eventually came forth her least depressing tale, *Shirley*. By this time she had achieved fame, and now, as well as again later over *Villette*, showed a sensitiveness to criticism which betrayed not only her innate delicacy, but the strain that had been put on her nerves. On a review she did not like by G. H. Lewes she noted:

> "I am to be on my guard against my enemies, but God preserve me from my friends."

She had asked Miss Martineau to criticize anything coarse she ever detected in any of her works, but when she did so Charlotte Brontë took such umbrage that their intercourse ceased.[1]

Eventually, after much hesitation, she married her father's curate, Mr. Nicholls, and it was agreed that they should live with him. He cordially approved, yet on the wedding-day suddenly refused to go to the church, and a lady had to give her away. In only nine months the curtain was run down:

> "Oh! I am not going to die, am I? He will not separate us, we have been so happy . . . some parts exceeded all I had ever imagined."

It is something to feel that a few rays illumined the stormy stress of her existence.

The true tribute to the Brontës lies in the fact that these Yorkshire maidens have given the most enduring, the most vivid, and the most forceful novels any of

[1] *Charlotte Brontë*, by Sir T. Wemyss Reid, London, 1879, p. 159.

their nationality have written — a fact daily more recognized all over the world.

Since then others have written; countless women have produced books of varying merit, some powerful, some potent for good and ill; but no others of the sex have been worthy to rank beside these illustrious women of the Victorian era. New models will be found, new notes will sound in young and responsive ears, but the silver chords the Brontës touched will re-echo in literature.

THE FEMINISM OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

IN the nineteenth century the multiplicity of notable women might, at a superficial glance, seem to have increased wholly out of proportion to their number in previous centuries. As a matter of fact, however, the women of great importance have been very few. The introspective memoirs of a Marie Bashkirtseff are no confessions of a female Rousseau. To that book there are hundreds of parallels in the experience of other women; but such things are in no sense feminine history except to the individual. They are the outcome of abnormal egoism degenerating into ego-mania. Thousands of women paint, but not even Rosa Bonheur can vie with the second rank of the male masters. All over the civilized world there is a dead level of respectable mediocrity in production. Out of all who have trod the stage, the mistresses of the art of acting in one generation merely become traditional names to their granddaughters.

The nineteenth century in the history of woman suggests a legion of capable executive or contemplative sisters—a rank and file full of emotion and of ability—but without captains or leaders in thought of the highest rank. Women still alive can be omitted.

Of those who are dead this can be said: Scholarly women such as Miss Mary Somerville, physicians of ability, the earliest in our time being Elizabeth Blackwell, philanthropists such as Baroness Burdett Coutts, these from England alone suggest many parallels. The foremost woman of the nineteenth century in one sense was Queen Victoria. She ran a great risk of being already half forgotten, for the sovereign who never patronized literature leaves no heralds to trumpet her fame to posterity; but she was too sensible for that. She achieved many things, but for the most part she achieved them passively. She was simple, she was virtuous, a good wife and a good mother; more than all, she possessed patience. If there was a storm, she sat passive in the semi-seclusion of her abstracted Court until it had passed away. Towards the close of her long rule she became a living symbol for much. After her demise, after the due national respect had been paid to the woman in whose reign the Empire had been consolidated and the whole earth contracted by the agencies of steam and electricity, after all this, from the silence of the grave there is little to tell of what mould Victoria was.

On the Continent, Eugenie played a dramatic part in France, where to-day she sometimes lingers unnoticed in the Paris that once fawned on her. Anarchists like Louise Michel seem hardly more sinister than some of those other women who have trailed their hideous course through the sordid dramas of certain of the eastern European States. Great wives, great mothers, great sisters there are of all time and in every generation, thanks be unto God, and in every age they are the gold that glitters on the muck heap. On the whole we are, however, too much in the midst of our

modern environment to write of contemporary or of recently contemporary feminology from an historical standpoint.

But there is one movement to which allusion is imperative: the feminine movement; that is to say, the movement by women to defeminize themselves. It has been already said that the French Revolution did not at once produce a new type of woman. It, however, proved to be mother of the modern feminine freedom—a freedom deservedly won, but too often at the cost of what was best in the feminine character. Perchance those in the forefront of the battle have sacrificed themselves for the sake of unborn generations of women. It may be so. To the present writer it is not perceptible. What becomes daily more obvious is a pushing, assertive individualism, which chafes at restriction, which ignores alike the moral instincts of sex and its duties, but which will throw everything to the winds in a wild grasp after egoism, in a frenzy for self-assertion, in a passion for self-discovery.

Napoleon once said to Madame de Campan, the founder of the school for girls at St. Germain:

"The old systems of education are worthless, our young girls are not well trained; what is wrong with education in France?"

"The mothers," answered Mme. de Campan.

"You are right," answered the Emperor quickly; "in that one word is comprised the system of the whole world's education. You must train for us mothers who know how to educate their children."

The whole trend of the movement for the emancipation of woman is to stultify woman's natural vocation of motherhood. To-day the mother of the Gracchi is replaced by a strenuous spinster with

pince-nez and theories, who has a smattering of every ology except that of being a good wife and a good mother. The woman who has made her son's heart and mind properly receptive, has rendered enormous service to the country and the community. The woman who shrieks renders none.

The Germans have very profound thinkers. One of them wrote: "Were all mothers thoroughly to grasp their responsibilities, the education of the people would be as near to perfection as possible." Instead, if a modern woman has the misfortune to be burdened with children, she calls in the aid of teachers and governesses to cover her own deficiencies and to supply her place with her offspring. If this history has shown anything, it has shown that love has always inspired great men, and that women have achieved their highest as an outcome of love. Love never dies, passion always flames; but the responsibilities, the outcome, these are shirked, whilst the feminine movement tries to put woman on a level with man. In an English comedy, *The Case of Rebellious Susan*, by Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, a learned judge remarks, "Bah! this was settled once and for all in the Garden of Eden." Without desiring to be tied and fettered by this tradition, there exist fundamental laws of sex which the feminism movement violates, and in this history shows that it errs. For of what use is history except to teach? Each day we are making history. And of what use to-day are the female makers of history, except to show posterity the exaggerated errors into which their excessive brain egoism runs? By all means free women from all superfluous shackles, but not from the elemental laws which Nature nourishes in every breast.

Kant has said, "man and woman constitute when

united the whole and entire being; one sex completes the other." The feminism movement is to disintegrate one from the other, and to regard as weaklings old-fashioned thinkers. Just as in the early centuries the celibate life was preached as a counsel of perfection, so to-day the tendency of the falling birth-rate and of the later age at which marriage is incurred form incontrovertible evidence of selfish indisposition to assume the ordinary burdens of existence. In the North American Slave War, at a time when thousands of women were thrown out of work in the English cotton districts, physicians noted the remarkable fact that infant mortality perceptibly decreased, in spite of the terrible distress prevalent. This fact has been repeatedly remarked. When forced by want of work to remain at home, the women had time to attend to their children.

The real key to the feminine movement of the nineteenth century is the desire for independence and the appreciation of the necessity of work in order to obtain it. The glorification of work for women has been at the cost of the depreciation of woman's real duty—that of a wife and a mother. The result in many cases has been debilitated nervous systems. That there are more women than men to-day is a fact, but as every woman—worthy of the name, no matter what her rank in life—has had one or more proposals of marriage, it follows that the proportion of rejected addresses is far larger than male vanity cares to confess.

Women have borne a tremendous part in the improvements of civilization. In the reform of social conditions alone, they have done the noblest work of the nineteenth century. They have cleansed the factories, purified the hospitals, raised the moral

standard; and underneath, humanity is just the same —man in opposition to woman. The increasing employment of women seems to be more and more confined, speaking broadly, to subordinate posts. Marriage probably removes from the sphere of commercial action the very women most eligible for the highest trusts.

At the feministic congress, Frau Hilda Sachs declared:

> "I always hear women boasting of being mothers, and fatiguing everyone by displaying their offspring. I have children, but I do not boast of it. It is a natural function which is not otherwise flattering. Perhaps you are too much haunted by the image of the Madonna carrying her son in her arms. I prefer the Venus of Milo; I find her more beautiful, more adorable. Yes, primarily woman is of value on her own account before she is of value because of her children."

It is only a woman who could thus be traitor to her sex. To the retort that "when woman and man will be equal there will be no more love; a very cultivated woman will not inspire love nor render it," an answer has been given. "She will not seek it, but it will come to her." From where? The woman who replies does not explain—for she cannot—yet she has seen much, for she is Olive Schreiner, daughter of an English missionary, wife of a Boer politician; herself a novelist, a dreamer, one who has frantically beaten the empty air, and with advancing years grows silent. America has made much boast of Mrs. Woodhull. But when she declares "the grandeur of a nation coincides with the intellectuality of its women," the present writer has no hesitation in saying she is

talking nonsense, for the subordination of women is invariably one of the prices of Empire.

There is truth in the contention of Mme. Marya Chéliza, who traces the social origin of the new woman in the Slav, the Swede—Frederika Bremer leading the way—the Finn and the Tchék: where the sex felt the influence of, and calmly ruminated with, Northern perspicacity on the lessons and issues of the French Revolution.

> "Under what influence has the new woman been developed? It is almost incredible, but it is true: under the influence of the impassioned study of truly idealistic poets, of romancers pursuing the noble chimaera of a less imperfect being, of philosophers teaching the elevation of mind, goodness, indulgence, humanitarian ideas, the doubled altruism of apostleship. The poetry, the novel of the Latins preach vice, roll the woman in mud and shame, throw scorn on her, reproach her, though under another guise, with the original sin. The literature of the north gives her a halo, and, in imitation of Christ, does not refuse to drink from the pitcher of the Samaritan woman."

From two issues does this revolted woman recoil, from marriage without love, from maternity without consent. Of course, a Saint Simonian like Claire Demar carried these views to the extreme of preaching free love, a debasement recurrent in every century, yet which every generation seems to regard as a totally new remission of moral responsibility. She died by her own hand, victim of her own excess.

When Goethe in *Faust* cites the mystic mothers, those primitive forces from which all else has emanated, the new woman cries in response that she is the

eternal feminine messiah. She quotes from the Vedas, from Zoroaster, from the Kabbalah. Yet centuries after these utterances the women of the East lie under an adamant yoke of complete severity. It is in the West that the only movement comes, a movement—at its mistaken best—which makes a crusade against prostitution, alcoholism, and war: all of which must exist as hideous necessities and which, if they could be swept away, would, in their disappearance, utterly upset the balance of civilization.

It is clear too that the foremost rank of self-assertive, self-emancipating women, whilst liberating themselves from human ties, are also disowning those of creed and church and to-day indulge in an agnosticism as moral as that of Voltairian atheism was sardonic. Yet never has superstition been more rife, and it seems as if the bulk of those who discard the religion of their childhood have to rely on humbugs often so palpable as to barely deserve exposure.

What has been achieved is to open a number of professions and employments to the sex. Government and private offices offer their lower posts to women, but it is notable that few rise to the higher positions. Lady clerks in postal and telegraph offices to-day are as much accepted as the assistants of the same sex are in dressmakers' establishments. The result, however, is an additional overcrowding of various departments of the labour market. Statistics in Paris show the greatest number of divorces have been amongst those where the wife has had some trade. Cases of mental and nervous breakdown are also on the increase. Whereas it is in many respects suitable that women should be physicians for women, there is abundant proof that very few women indeed place practical faith in the skill of their sisters. In

India, where male doctors are forbidden, women doctors have, however, ministered with invaluable results to those imprisoned in zenanas and harems. As nurse woman is supreme: as physician in Europe she is still an exotic; and it is remarkable that of lady doctors only very few are married.

It may seem an anachronism that in countries where women may not have a vote, the sovereign can be a queen. As a matter of fact, except under unusual circumstances, queens have been far more constitutional sovereigns than the fathers they succeeded; for instance, Mary Tudor than Henry VIII, Anne than James II. Women's suffrage may be inevitable, but like most long-anticipated social cataclysms, it will not exercise much active effect when it does come into force. In such parochial suffrage as the sex has yet obtained in England no marked change has been consequently visible. In Russia a wife often attends the meeting of the village community when her husband is working at a distance. Yet the proverb of the peasant runs, "The hair is long, but the mind is short," and "Among seven women there is but one soul." One European instance is curious. The Bernese women, liable to the payment of communal tax, were given votes by proxy. For thirty-three years they never availed themselves of the privilege; so soon as they had taken part in an election for the first time, the privilege was removed.

Great excitement has been aroused in France, Italy, Belgium and the United States by the efforts of women to be admitted to the Bar. Where successful the individuals seem to have been promptly lost to sight. More important is the economic emancipation which gives a woman the control of her money, preventing a wife being bound hand and foot beneath

the tyranny of a husband. The Married Woman's Property Act marked a liberation of the sex in England which was righteous and has worked for nothing but good. In the same way women's colleges at male universities have led to none of the abuses prophesied by satirists, but also have produced but little of that tremendous force which the early advocates fancied would be set in motion. Results are far more temperate than the forecasts of them.

A few excerpts from views of feminists on various points are worth considering. The Italian poet, Sylvia Albertoni, wrote:

> "For the truly sensitive and nobly intellectual woman, love is sacrifice; it is the self-immolation at all hours of the day for those she loves—brothers, parents, husband, son; it is her happiness, I might say her thirst. I do not wish to speak of those striking heroic sacrifices which have rendered women truly celebrated in the history of races; I include the little unknown sacrifices which make up the life of a loving woman; sacrifice of her time, her tastes, of herself; all that is performed in the silence of the hearth, of schools, of hospitals, where the wife, mother, teacher, sister of charity consecrates everything to the well-being of others, to bring them up, to save them from physical and moral death."

Not dissimilar in the train of thought, perhaps, is this phrase of Mrs. Josephine Butler, though it is more aggressively militant:

> "The antagonism of principles as opposite as heaven and hell implies conflict, war without truce; until one side is victorious, then, and not till then, can there be peace worthy of the name."

The head of the feminist movement in Poland, Madame Koutschalka-Reinschmidt, strikes a firmer note:

> "The emancipation of woman is an element of morality and of peace, which will enable humanity to make a great advance towards the general happiness, which can only be based on one true morality and on one for all."

Mrs. Palmer, representing the Woman's World Congress at the opening of the Columbian Exhibition, ended her speech thus:

> "More important than the discovery of Christopher Columbus which we celebrate to-day, is the one which governments have just made, that of the woman. What shall be the next message that governments shall send to women?"

The miles on the road of feminism between Mary Wollstonecraft and modern times are difficult to see in looking back along the journey. There was certainly plenty of feminine aggressiveness in 1848, and a Feminine Constitution was actually proclaimed by a forgotten male, M. Borme. Victor Hugo, in the funeral oration for one of the proscribed by the *coup d'état* of December, uttered the phrase, "the eighteenth century proclaimed the rights of man, the nineteenth shall proclaim the rights of woman." Since then congresses have proclaimed progress for the most part won by the efforts of individuals; the communism of to-day may declare "there shall be no distinction between men and women but that of their virtues and their talents." In retort let the words of

Mrs. Fawcett be set forth in a sense the reverse of that which she intended to convey: "To imagine it is possible to reverse the most solemn of the edicts of nature by little regulations of human invention forms the most grotesque irreverence towards nature." Exactly.

WOMEN IN AMERICA

IN the preceding chapters we have treated of the women of many nations, and profound differences among them were pointed out in more than one respect. Yet, with all their differences, there is between all the women hitherto treated a certain similarity, a certain trait common to all of them. There is indeed, as we have seen, a far cry between the woman of Sparta and that of Athens; between the Greek and the Roman woman; between the lady or *bourgeoise* of the medieval age and the woman of the Renascence; let alone the women of the seventeenth or eighteenth century and the women of the nineteenth. But all differences notwithstanding, there is between all these women of various periods of history more than one trait in common. Thus, to mention only one of the connecting links, all women of Europe, whether of Græco-Roman times or of more modern periods, resemble one another in their interest in man. They do care for man. They avow by words or deed that, when all is said and done, they feel that their principal aim and object in life is to meet, conquer, and possess the right man. All of them would readily approve of the answer of that Frenchwoman who on being pitied on account of her sufferings in giving birth to a son, exclaimed: "Ah—you do not know what pride it is to be the mother of a man!"

The women, on the other hand, of whom we are going to treat at present, differ essentially and completely from the women of Europe. These women—the American maid and wife—are fundamentally different from their sisters in Europe, whether in the past or in the present. Far from taking the slightest interest in man, they look down upon him. Man in America plays neither first nor second fiddle; he does not even beat the drum. He is the mere lamplighter of the orchestra of life in the United States. This, we are fully aware, is not only disagreeable, but positively revolting to Europeans. To American men, however, such a state of complete subjection to their womanhood is not revolting at all. Of all systems of slavery that in which American men find themselves, with regard to their women, is the most willingly tolerated. Far from chafing under the tyranny exercised by their women, the American men rejoice in it; they are proud of it; and he who calls it by its proper name is to them an object of hatred and detestation.

At various times different European travellers or semi-official "Commissions" went to the States to inquire into the social life of the great trans-Atlantic Republic. Nearly every one of these investigators was struck with the singular ascendancy of women in America. Already in the journal of the brothers Goncourt (for April 23rd, 1867) we read of the strange effect of an American woman on such close students of humanity as themselves. They say: "Je dinais hier à l'ambassade, à côté d'une jeune femme, la femme de l'envoyé des États-Unis à Bruxelles, une Américaine, et voyant à l'œuvre cette grâce libre et conquérante, ce diable au corps d'une jeune race, cette virtualité de la coquetterie qui garde le charme et le domination de

la *flirtation* ches ces jeunes filles devenues des épouses, et me rappelant d'autre part l'activité et *l'entrance* de certains Américains de Paris, je me disais que ces hommes et ces femmes semblaient destinés à devenir les futurs conquérants du monde."

More than one "exquisite" student of the shades and innuendoes of male and female nature has been misled, as we take it, by the dash and *verve* of the American woman. One has only to compare realities with the prediction of the Goncourts. Have American women in these forty years made good the expectations expressed in the passage just quoted? Have they or their menfolk "conquered" the world? The fact is, the Germans have done that to a much greater extent than the Americans. The same Goncourts, in the same part of their invaluable *Journal*, speak of the *Allemande* or the German woman as of one who can and does rouse in man the more ideal sentiments. Well, it is Germany and not America that has, in the last thirty years, made the most remarkable conquests. The Goncourts were not in a position to judge the American woman. Brought up as they were, in an exclusively French atmosphere, they could not possibly surmise to what an extent all conversation with an American woman is what in England is called a "made dish." Before meeting the Goncourts, that American woman of whom they speak had read up everything about them, and she acted up to it accordingly. Of spontaneity or abandon there is not the slightest trace in an American woman. Nor does she believe that any other person is, at any given time, spontaneous or naïve. Nothing is more common in the States than to be asked by one of their "bright" women, "How do you do this or that thing? What trick have you for doing it?" In their minds, in their innermost

minds, they are firmly convinced that all the great pianists, violinists, actors, orators, singers—or, in one word, all the great artists—have their "tricks" with which they work upon the audience. In native, elemental talent they do not believe at all. How could they? They have themselves not the trace of such talent.

In spite of the most extraordinary measures and institutes for the development of the intellectual or artistic faculties of women in America; in spite of numberless colleges, universities, "female academies," libraries, societies, debating clubs, papers, magazines, and—isms; woman has in America done none of those remarkable deeds of a literary, scientific or artistic character for which the Somervilles, Fawcetts, Brontës, George Eliots, Madame de Staëls, George Sands, Madame Jules Adams, etc. etc. are famous in Europe. There are over twelve million pianos in American houses, used mostly by women; yet there is not a single American pianiste of even the third order. There are thousands of schools for American women; yet there is not a single American woman of note as a scholar. Amongst singers, indeed, there have been a few American women whose voices were striking, sensational, and technically remarkable. But of voices soulful, endowed with that mysterious *timbre* that alone gives fascination to a voice, there has never been a case. The voices of American women are like themselves: stunners. They bring about what the French call *des effets à coups de pistolet.* Music there is little in them.

And how could that be? Voice, in music, or the singing voice proper, cannot but be denied to a native whose speaking voice is strident, nasal, and full of "twang." One cannot in speaking "twang" like a

zither out of tune and sing, at the same time, like a Stradivari violin. The American woman, absolutely incapable of understanding the nature of naïve genius, invariably believes that the art of Mesdames Patti, Lucca, Wilt, or Gerster is only an arithmetical sum of tricks which has been acquired by hard learning. She never allows for the x of genius; hence she never has any. Indeed, the misproportion between the means of doing great things in art or science, and the things done in those branches of human effort by American women, is vast. It is as if one hired a monster orchestra of one thousand instrumentalists to teach a vast audience—the art of tuning instruments.

In England women are seldom brilliant conversationists, and as to outward show of genius or talent there is not much to be noticed in them. But what does not appear on the surface may nevertheless exist beneath it, and scores of Englishwomen have, by works of real genius in science, literature, art, or mere erudition, testified to and proved their intellectual strength and solidity. It is in vain that we look for such independent and objective evidence for the intellect or mental grit of American women. They shine only in the sensational. Whenever there arises in the United States one of those astounding impostures—religious, philosophical, or social—which have these forty or fifty years paralysed Europeans with utter amazement at the incredible gullibility of the Yankees, one or another American woman is sure to be at the head of it. Spiritualism and Christian Science were practically founded and spread by a few American women. The psychological reason of all this is not too difficult to discover; and since it bears on the essence and principle of American womanhood, we shall for a moment inquire into it.

American life, like American territory, is geometrical, reasoned, neatly outlined, based on a few purely logical and not on historical or traditional principles. The men who from 1775 to 1783 fought out the political independence and the constitution of the United States were necessarily theorists and political logicians. Under the influence of their French friends and abettors, without whose military and naval help they could never have been able to defeat England, they became, like the Encyclopaedists of Paris, contemptors of history and worshippers of Reason. It appeared to them, whether their name was Alexander Hamilton, Adams, Jefferson, or Washington, not only possible, but also imperative to found a new State on Reason only; that is, on what they supposed to be the "natural" basis of complete equality of men and women. Accordingly, they framed a constitution in which Reason, or what they imagined to be Reason, reigned supreme. The whole of life, as the whole of the territory then belonging to and afterwards acquired by them, was mapped out logically, clearly, reasonably. Nearly all European "prejudices" of nationality, sex, age, locality, language, and of other historical growths were thrown overboard. This could not but render the daily life of the Americans somewhat dry and savourless. In a system of life where the emotional staging of social intercourse is reduced to a minimum, the charm of human existence is practically non-existent. A system of life based on Reason is a system of arithmetic based on sentiment. The latter leads to astrology and necromancy and similar absurdities; the former is bound to lead to eccentricities of all kinds, in that it leaves a powerful element of human nature unsatisfied. The very fact that American life is, in its structure, regular, geomet-

rical, and ultra-reasonable, is the cause of the most incredible freaks of unreasonable and absurd phenomena in American life. The mysterious and emotional forces of the human soul, whether as individuals or as collective persons, being left unoccupied and inactive, they begin to rot and degenerate, and thus produce all sorts of morbid consequences.

Now, it does not take much experience to see that those mysterious, emotional, and subconscious forces are manifested and represented by women more fully than by men. In a commonwealth, therefore, in which the subconscious forces of the people are left fallow, women are more likely to suffer than men. And, on the other hand, women in such a State are more than likely to avail themselves of the chances given them by the inadequacy of its institutions. These institutions, being far too reasoned and geometrical, leave ample interstices for smuggling into the body politic the prohibited goods of subconscious phenomena. And so it comes to pass that women in America are, as a rule, the protagonists of those marvellously absurd "movements," "religions," "cures," "beliefs," etc., with which the Americans have enriched the history of human eccentricity. In this sense it may be said that while American men have done everything in their power to place all things under the hot iron of reason, American women have done much to filter into everything the opium of unreason.

This is not the only contrast between American men and women. To put it plainly, the American woman has little if anything in common with the American man. We have just now seen that the original and inalienable nature of woman has not been taken notice of in the construction of American life.

That life, with its extreme reasonableness, is thoroughly unfit for the woman proper. Hence woman in America was bound to stand aloof from the life of her nation or to get un-womaned. She, not unnaturally, chose the latter. This is the deepest cause of that strange defeminization of American women. Unable to develop her natural womanly instinct in a society the laws and customs of which are made with a total disregard for the one great power in women, that is for sentiment and emotion, the American woman necessarily drifted into a mentality and social attitude distinctly different from all that has so far characterized women in Europe. This fundamental fact will become clearer by considering the history of life in America from another standpoint.

In Christian Europe, ever since the age after the Migration of Nations, say 900 A.D., the central fact of social life was the establishment of a home. Of a home, woman is the very soul; and consequently European women have, as their most prominent if frequently hardly recognizable feature, their love and management of a finer abode, called home. Whether in England, France, or in Germany, this passion for one's home is tantamount to a passion for one definite spot on the territory of one's country. The aristocratic families of Europe carry that love of their strictly localized home to the furthest limits of class-pride. All this is, in America, either not known at all, or mere imitation of European usages. On the contrary, American life was necessarily and inevitably built up on the absence of all homes. The Americans, when after 1783, and during the time when all Europe was absorbed by the wars from 1792 to 1815, they learned of the immensity and fertility of their *hinterland* from the Alleghanny Mountains to the Pacific, clearly saw that their

[illegible] not to say unique, task for the next three [illegible] generations was to possess themselves of that [illegible] treasure-trove, their *hinterland*. So they [illegible] course in doing so they had practically [illegible] the old European idea of a fixed home, [illegible] attempts at raising the love of home to [illegible] in country. The point for them was not [illegible] have, but to have had a home. The constant [illegible] was a matter of the greatest importance to them. This home disposed of the possible [illegible] type of womanhood such as Europe knows. [illegible] whose power is so closely related, so intimately [illegible] with the fact and the idea of a fixed home, [illegible] which cannot offer such fixity of home-[illegible] to its members must necessarily impair the fibre [illegible] the community of its women. It will be seen that the process of unwomanning the American women was one that no human power or foresight could obviate.

In saying this I do not in the least mean to reproach the women of the States. In former books and articles I have said the same thing about the women of America, and in many an American periodical or book I have been treated to wall-shaking criticism on account of my "ignorance" and "wilful misrepresentation." However, I have survived all that, and here, as everywhere, I calmly state that the American woman is not and cannot be anything like the type of womanhood that, from the Hellenes downwards, all European nations have considered as the right model. I am quite aware of the fact, that hundreds of thousands of American women are hard-worked housekeepers and mothers and wives. Yet this apparent argument does not prevail at all against the statement. All these hundreds of thousands of American women, *de facto* devoted to nothing but to the cares of their homes, do

not in the least invalidate my thesis. While the mere external or material fact of their hard work inside their homes is undeniable, yet they too are potentially as hostile or indifferent to their homes, husbands, and their maternity, as are such of the American women whom here I take to be the type of American womanhood. I mean this: whenever a woman of the States does devote her principal attention and labour to her home, she does so because, owing to the insufficient income of her husband, she is absolutely compelled to do so. But let that hard-working and apparently home-loving American woman learn of a substantial increase in her husband's income, and all her potentialities will at once step out into concrete reality, and she will become, from one day to another, nothing but a pleasure- and sensation-ridden frequenter of all bazaars, lectures, operas, exhibitions, "crazes," and an eager purchaser of the "latest" costumes, jewellery, books, and furniture. The French *bourgeoise* will, in nineteen out of twenty cases of such a sudden improvement in her husband's income, alter not an iota in the manner or method of her life; in her the potentialities of the "shining stunner" and sensationalist are very feeble indeed. In every woman in America they are stronger than any other propensity. This is why I am disinclined to admit any real exceptions with regard to the type of womanhood in America.

Woman, then, in America cannot develop, and has never developed, that peculiar charm of either beauty or grace that in Europe has always been held to be the greatest power of women. Not that American women are lacking in a beauty of their own. Quite the contrary. While but too many women in the States are sadly deficient in two of the greatest attrac-

tions, viz. in a clear or rosy complexion and in well-shaped hands, yet the type of American beauty is one that excels in more than one feature. The lines in the face are bold, harmonious, and remarkable both in the bony and in the fleshy parts of the head. They have not only fine noses and good profiles, but also handsome cheeks. The chin has indeed no charm; but the shoulders are frequently magnificent, and the women of New York and Kentucky have also fine hips. What, to a European, spoils the effect of their beauty, is the expression of their eyes and their voices. The eyes as well as the voices are strident, cold, emotionless, full of calculating ambition, and far too knowing. Of abandon or *naïveté* there is not a trace; and, as if to bring all unsympathetic features to a climax, most of the women in America are—*horribile dictu*—humourists. I venture to repeat my view, that a humorous woman, under sixty, is like a painted man. A woman may be witty, bright, or *spirituelle;* she cannot be humorous, without losing her enamel and morning-dew. Humour proper feeds on the wholesale mendacity of modern life, on its countless incongruities, on its lies and false positions. No real man wants his womanfolk to be too much of an initiate in respect of all this inveracity and carking vulgarity of life.

The preceding sketch of the American woman would be incomplete without an explanation of the singular respect and adoration that the American woman enjoys on the part of the men in America. It is, indeed, a matter of astonishment to any thoughtful observer of modern life, that while the women of Europe are treated, by European men, at best, with much tenderness and affection, the women of America are placed by American men on a pedestal so high

as to amount almost to idolization. Considering the greater poetical attractiveness, the greater charm, of European women, one might naturally expect the contrary result. Yet nothing can be surer than the fact that Europeans entertain for their women very much less respect, chivalrousness, and deference, than do American men for American women. The punishments inflicted by the laws of America on any male beating or insulting a woman clearly show the high status occupied by American women; and amongst women from Europe who have spent several years in the States, there is a proverbial saying to the effect that "America is the Paradise of women." In this view there is undoubtedly much truth. Not only are in America nearly all careers quite open to women, so that in America a far greater proportion of women are able to earn their own living than in any country of Europe; but the general tone of men towards women is one of great and frequently exquisite politeness, so that women of any age may, without danger to their honour or reputation, move about as freely as do men.

Men in America do worship their women; they do look up to them; and untold husbands in the States are quite happy to toil and moil incessantly in their offices or factories, without any real or considerable distraction whatever, so as to enable their wives and daughters to be "highly" dressed, to be present at all fashionable affairs, to "do" Europe or Asia, and to "receive" with splendour. The American husband is quite satisfied to be a male Cinderella, as long as his wife or daughter shines in society. This peculiar attitude is only the natural complement of the peculiar status of the American woman. The latter is the opposite of what we note in Europe; no wonder,

then, that the relation of men to women in America is likewise altered. For our present purpose, however, it is not sufficient to state the bare fact of American male Cinderellaism, but also to account for it. That, I take it, can be done satisfactorily. It amounts to this, that women in the States form the only aristocracy of the country, and are accordingly treated by the Americans with the respect and deference that all nations have at all times manifested to their aristocracy. This view, I have no doubt, will appear very paradoxical to a nation that prides itself on the total absence of privileged classes, or aristocracies of any kind. It is well known that the chief pride of an American is in the existence of "perfect equality" amongst his fellow-citizens. This, as far as mere law goes, is not untrue. Only, law does not go very far. Aristocracy is a thing that no high-strung nation can do without. It is not a "prejudice" or "survival" of the "middle ages," but a permanent category of history. It occurs everywhere, if in shapes and forms of great variety. In America it could not assume the form that it has taken in Europe; as in England it has not shaped itself after the manner of the Continental nobility.

Aristocracy proper is impossible among men in America, in that man came to America mostly from a passionate desire to do away with all "privileged classes" from the exigencies of which he had suffered so much in Europe. For this, and for other reasons, aristocracy as a male institution could not possibly arise in the old Colonies or the subsequent United States. Yet, an aristocracy of some kind is, in high-strung nations, as indispensable as are municipal councils and boards of education. Accordingly, the American nation created, outside the frame of Law

proper, an aristocracy of persons who are not explicitly recognized as such in the Assemblies as Courts of the Country, but who nevertheless represent to all intents and purposes the aristocracy of the States. These are the women of America. Once we look at social life in America from this, the true point of view, we are enabled to place every phenomenon thereof in its natural and comprehensible relation to the rest. Europeans have long been accustomed to the singular, not to say passionate loyalty of "leal vassals" to their lords. If, then, they contemplate the relation of American men to their women as one essentially identical with that of a clansman to his laird, they cannot wonder that American women engage the most intimate sentiments of American men, and that the latter are roused to uncontrollable indignation by any display of hostility to or disparagement of their women.

The last word, then, in American womanhood is this, that they represent actually what the ancient Greek myths (if myths they be) represented symbolically—a realm of Amazons grafted upon a realm of man. The old Greek Amazon is indeed the evident architype of the women of the United States; and a real sculptor could not typify the glory and splendour of American womanhood more effectively than by representing it in a statue of an Amazon. European women are Helenas, Penelopes, Nausicaas, Clytemnestras, or Antigones; American women are Amazons. In this way we can get a real and deep insight into the nature of a social phenomenon that has so far baffled most of the students of American civilization. Whether such Amazonian women are or are not likely to promote the real welfare of a nation, whether they are or are not the bane rather than the

boon of the American nation, that is a question, the solution of which "lies in the lap of the gods." Most Europeans are not inclined to indulge in great hopes of improvement by women of that kind. Perhaps, then, Europeans are wrong.

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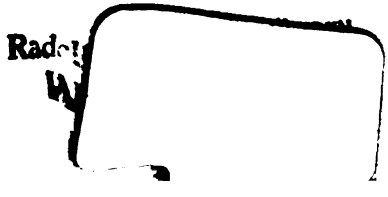
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